BEIRUT ARAB UNIVERSITY

ESSAYS ON LANGUAGE
AND
LITERATURE

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1972

PRINTED IN LEBANON BY BOUHEIRY BROTHERS - BEIRUT

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PREFACE

In his introduction to 'Collected Essays in Literary Criticism', Herbert Read states that "... once a department of science was established with the mind itself as its subject, a new situation was created... Psychology, that is to say, impinges directly on the province of the literary critic... I have been gradually drawn towards a psychological type of literary criticism because I have realized that psychology, more particularly the method of psycho-analysis, can offer explanations of many problems connected with the personality of the poet, the technique of poetry, and the appreciation of the poem."[1] *In other words, Read, like I. A. Richards, claims that literary criticism should be an annex or a branch of psychology. This may be valid from the psychologist's viewpoint, but not from the linguist's. Using a similar argument we may say that since there is nothing closer to the mind of man than the language which he uses and which distinguishes him from the rest of the living creatures, then the study of the science of language, i. e. Linguistics, can contribute much towards the interpretation of man's thought and art, i. e. literature, and in*

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1) Read, H., *Collected Essays in Literary Criticism*, Faber and Faber Ltd., London, Second Edition, 1950, p. 13.

a more objective manner than the conceptual tools of psycho-analysis. Whether we are concerned with the investigation of the 'technique' of the writer or with the 'appreciation' of the work of art we need always to have recourse to language as the only observable criterion by which we can judge the writer. It is impossible to reach conclusions about a writer's philosophy without 'a previous analysis of his language' [1] *as Firth puts it.*

But transition from the traditional schools of criticism to the modern one should be gradual and cautious. The first essay in this collection : 'Linguistics and the Interpretation of Literature' is an attempt in this direction. In order to make it relevant to both English and Arabic cultures I have drawn my examples from English as well as Arabic poetry. Beside examples from Louis MacNeice and Dylan Thomas, I have chosen samples from the writings of two contemporary Arab poets : Salah Abd-El-Sabour, one of the leading modern Egyptian poets, and Abd-El-Wahab El-Bayyati, a modern Iraqi poet, and tried to apply to them the concepts proposed within a given linguistic framework.

In the third and fourth essays on 'English Poetry in the Nineteen-Thirties' and 'O'Casey's Theatre of the People' respectively, I have borne in mind that no

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1) Firth, J. R., *Papers in Linguistics 1934-1951,* Oxford University Press, London, 1964, p. 202.

'opinion' about the poem or play is given unless validated by evidences from the text itself. By adopting such approach we may one day realize Matthew Arnold's wish of attaining 'a strict judgment'[1] *in the interpretation of thought and art.*

The remaining essay in this collection is the second essay entitled 'Language and the Theory of Context'. The emphasis here is laid on the fact that language is basically a social phenomenon. Thus, in our investigation of a given language, to disregard the study of the social context in which this language is embedded is to leave much unsaid. The theory is dealt with, first as originated by the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, and then as improved upon by J. R. Firth, the founder of the British School of Linguistics, who has adapted it to suit linguistic purposes. Examples from Lebanese and Egyptian Colloquial Arabic are provided to illustrate the points raised in the course of discussion.

April 1972. ALI G. E. EZZAT

1) Arnold, M., *Essays in Criticism*, Everyman's Library, London, 1966, p. 236.

ESSENTIAL CONVENTIONS FOR READING TRANSCRIBED ARABIC FORMS

Consonants

b	voiced bilabial plosive
d	voiced denti-alveolar plosive, non-emphatic [1]
f	voiceless labio-dental fricative
g	voiced velar plosive
h	glottal fricative
ḥ	voiceless pharyngeal fricative
k	voiceless velar plosive
l	voiced denti-alveolar lateral
m	voiced bilabial nasal
n	voiced denti-alveolar nasal
q	voiceless uvular plosive
r	voiced alveolar flap
r r	voiced alveolar trill
s	voiceless denti-alveolar sulcal fricative, non-emphatic [1]
ʃ	voiceless palato-alveolar fricative
t	voiceless denti-alveolar plosive, non-emphatic [1]
w	labio-velar semi-vowel
x	vioceless uvular fricative
y	voiced palatal semi-vowel
z	voiced denti-alveolar sulcal fricative
ʔ	glottal plosive
ε	voiced pharyngeal fricative
ɣ	voiced uvular fricative
j	voiced palato-alveolar affricate
θ	voiceless dental fricative
ð	voiced dental fricative, non-emphatic [1]

1) See 'Emphatic Consonants' below.

Emphatic Consonants

ḍ , ṣ , ṭ , ẓ are 'emphatic' consonants corresponding to 'non-emphatic' d , s , t , ð respectively. The 'emphatics' are distinguished from the 'non-emphatics' by the fact that the tongue in the articulation of the former is laterally expanded and its front part is low, whereas the lips are either neutral or slightly rounded and protruded.

Vowels

i	half-close to close front spread vowel, close when long or final
u	half-close back to central rounded vowel, close rounded when long or final
e	mid to half-close front spread vowel, short and long
o	mid to half-close back rounded vowel, short and long
a	front open vowel, short and long
a	back open vowel

Long Vowels are indicated by double letters.

Geminated Consonants are indicated by doubling the consonant-letter.

Symbols and Abbreviations

A hyphen (—) marks elisions at word-junctions, but it does not necessarily mark the place at which the elided portion occurs in corresponding contexts of non-elision.

A slant line (/) means "or"

N. Noun   Adj. Adjective

Other less frequent symbols will be referred to when introduced.

I. LINGUISTICS AND THE INTERPRETATION OF LITERATURE



I. LINGUISTICS AND THE INTERPRETATION OF LITERATURE

— 1 —

In the "Function of Criticism" Eliot suggests 'comparison' and 'analysis' as the "chief tools of the critic" [1] with a view to arriving at what Eliot calls 'truth' or 'fact'. But Eliot has not attempted to define or elaborate these two tools by mentioning the devices which can be employed in the process of comparison and analysis. In other words, Eliot, as a critic, has not provided us with an integrated or half-integrated technique which can be relied upon in the process of objective criticism. Besides, he admits the limitation of his definition of 'truth' or 'fact' by saying :

> "But if anyone complains that I have not defined truth, or fact, or reality, I can only say apologetically that it was no part of my purpose to do so, but only to find a scheme into which, whatever they are, they will fit, if they exist." [2]

1) Eliot, T. S., *Selected Essays,* Faber and Faber, London, 1963, p p. 32-33.

2) Ibid., p. 34.

We are in need, then, of a scientific technique which we can adopt in the interpretation of literature. I am using the word 'interpretation' here in the same sense used by Eliot in the above-mentioned essay :

> "...it is fairly certain that 'interpretation' ...is only legitimate when it is not interpretation at all, but merely *putting the reader in possession of facts* [1] which he would otherwise have missed." [2]

Modern linguistics can contribute much towards the accurate and objective study of literature in general, and literary style [3] in particular. In this section an attempt is made to introduce a linguistic framework within which the literary critic or stylistician can operate, together with the discussion of problems which may arise in the procedure of interpretation. The second section is an application of some of the theories proposed in the first part to samples of modern Arabic poetry represented in Salah Abd-El-Sabour's collection of poems entitled "riḥlatun fi-llayli wa q*a*ṣ*aa*ʔidu ʔuxr*a*" (A Journey at Night and Other Poems) [4], and Abd-El-Wahab El-Bayyati's anthology of poems called

1) My italics.

2) *Selected Essays,* Op. Cit., p. 32.

3) For the definition of the word 'style' and its various senses, see Crystal, D. and Davy, D., *Investigating English Style*, Longmans, London, 1969, pp. 9-10.

4) Translated into English by Samar Attar, The Public Egyptian Corporation for Authorship and Publication, Cairo, 1970.

" kalimaatun laatamuut " (Words that Will not Die) [1]. In fact, the ' interpretation ' of modern poetry needs strenuous efforts on the part of both linguists and critics in order to convey its artistic and aesthetic value to the readers who are often baffled by the stylistic devices employed by modern poets, whether consciously or unconsciously, for the achievement of their effects. In such ' genre ' it is futile to concentrate on the ' content ', i. e. meaning, ideas, images . . etc. Modern poets are concerned most with the discovery of human mind and soul, and in their quest for the innermost secrets of man, they sacrifice surface clarity of meaning, apparent and logical association of ideas, and presentation of connected images. Consequently, vagueness, ambiguity and complexity are among the distinctive features of modern poetry. The attempt, then, to ' understand ' the ' meaning ' of such verse on the part of the critic or reader will be a failure or, at best, a game of guess-work or fancying. Personal interpretation " may supply opinion instead of educating taste .... The real corrupters are those who supply opinion or fancy ; " [2] In addition, personal interpretations may infer meanings which have not occurred to the writer's mind, and they often lack internal evidence from the text itself, i. e. they fail to produce facts. Here, again, I quote Eliot :

1) Dar-El-Adaab Publications, Beirut, Second Edition, 1969.

2) *Selected Essays,* Op. Cit., p. 33.

> " And any book, any essay, any note in *Notes* and *Queries*, which produces a fact even of the lowest order about a work of art is a better piece of work than nine-tenths of the most pretentious critical journalism, in journals or in books. " [1]

However, concentration on the semantic aspect whether in the study of language or literature should be considered a weak point in any technique which claims to be 'scientific' and 'acurate'. Bloomfield maintains that

> "the statement of meanings is... the weak point in language - study, and will remain so until human knowledge advances far beyond its present state." [2]

This statement applies primarily to the study of language, but we may extend it to that of literature with certain qualifications. Investigation of 'meaning' in any literary text will lead us nowhere unless it is based on formal observable phenomena, i. e. unless it is validated by concrete and firm evidences from the text. This is why priority in interpretation, from the present standpoint, should be given to 'form' which we can judge objectively. This 'form' is not utterly void of meaning, since "it is precisely through the *form* of our words and sentences that we communicate our meanings. " [3]

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1) Ibid., p. 33.

2) Bloomfield, L., *Language*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1962, p. 140.

3) Sledd, James, *A Short Introduction to English Grammar*, Scott, Foresman and Company, Chicago, 1959, p. 62.

Literary form may be approached from three levels which are called Levels of Analysis. There is no hierarchy among these levels, but the analyst may start his attack on the text under consideration from whichever level he chooses. He can also tackle the text from one or more levels. Likewise, he can deal with one or more levels at a time. The following is a brief description of each level.

Lexical Level

This level is concerned with the study of the lexical items of the text. By a lexical item we do not mean single words only, but lexical units which are closely related both structurally and semantically. Thus, idioms, proverbs and phrasal verbs are considered lexical items. These should not be confused with grammatical categories, since a lexical item enters into a choice different from that of a grammatical class. In Halliday's words :

> " Contrary to what is often assumed, it is *not* because an item is grammatically a *word* that it operates in the language as a lexical item. Many lexical items are also words, but some of them are not. For exemple, ' turn off', in 'turn off the light', is one lexical item though two words. Similarly many items, such as 'this' and ' the ', though grammatically words, are not lexical items, if we think of a lexical item as that which enters into a certain kind of choice

that is different from a grammatical choice. It operates, not in a closed system, but in an open set." [1]

Thus, English idioms such as 'a bad egg', 'have the ball at one's feet', 'His bark is worse than his bite' 'beat/flog a dead horse', 'All his geese are swans' ..etc., and phrasal verbs such as 'put on', 'put off', 'take after', 'take down' ..etc. are lexical units, since they are indivisible, i.e. their meaning cannot be inferred from the meaning of their separate component parts. However, the analyst's task is to observe the way in which certain lexical items tend to pattern in the style of a given author, i.e. the use the writer makes of lexical items by way of synonymy, contrariety, word-polarity [2], word-association, word-formation, derivation, and collocation. The main framework suggested by lexicology for the study of lexical items comprises two theoretical categories of major importance :

1. Collocation
2. Lexical Sets.

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1) Halliday, M. A. K., McIntosh, A., and Strevens, P., *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching,* Longmans, London, 1964, p. 33. For more details, see also Sinclair, J. McH, 'Beginning the Study of Lexis', in Bazell, C. E. and others (ed.), *In Memory of J. R. Firth,* Longmans, London, 1966, pp. 410-430.

2) For this term, see 'Modes of Meaning', in Firth, J. R. *Papers in Linguistics 1934-1951,* Oxford University Press, London, 1964, p. 199.

Collocation is the formal pattern which accounts for the tendency of certain lexical items to co-occur with certain other lexical items. They are habitually associated with each other and usually seen in the same linguistic environment. The collocation of the two lexical items X and Y means that if X is mentioned, then Y is expected to accompany it, e.g. cup and tea in 'a cup of tea'. It is also a two-way expectation, i.e. X expects Y as Y expects X [1], for example, 'April' and 'fool' in 'April-fool', 'matter' and 'life and death' in 'a matter of life and death'. In Egyptian Colloquial Arabic, the following words collocate with each other :

> nɑhɑɑr (day) ... ʔɑbyɑḍ / ʔiswid (white / black) ; sikka (way, road, direction)... ʔissalaama/ʔinna-daama (safety / sorrow) ; ʃafaɛ (mediated)... nafaɛ (came to one's help) ; ʔiṭṭoor (the ox)... ʔiṭṭiḥiin (the ground corn, maize.. etc.) ; ʃuɣla (occupation, job, post) ... maʃɣala (pastime).

However, in literary style we may differentiate between normal collocations as the above examples, and unusual collocations which writers, especially modern poets, resort to at times for producing certain stylistic effects on their readers. They also occasionally rely on the interaction between normal collocations and unu-

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1) Cf. Firth, "The collocation of a word or a 'piece' is not to be regarded as mere juxtaposition, it is an order of *mutual expectancy*. The words are mutually expectant and mutually prehended." See 'A Synopsis of Linguistic Theory', in Palmer, F.R. (ed.), *Selected Papers of J.R. Firth 1952-59,* Longmans, London, 1968, p. 181.

sual ones for evoking certain images and allusions in our minds. The latter type of collocations is of immediate concern to us here. McIntosh states that unusual collocations

> "... are the kind which tend to be of such importance in literature, and especially in poetry. They are part of the machinery whereby the prose writer or the poet strives, over a larger or smaller stretch of text, to convey something which he cannot achieve by normal means, and he thereby sets us a problem in which we can lean on no experience of directly relevant instances." [1]

A quick glance at modern poets like W.H. Auden, L. MacNeice, S. Spender and D. Thomas reveals to us scores of instances of these unusual collocations, but we have to be careful as to the interpretation of their impact on us when we first encounter them. Take, for example, these two lines from MacNeice's ' Meeting Point ' :

> The camels crossed the miles of sand
> That stretched around the cups and plates ; [2]

The natural response of the reader to such lines will be the result of his awareness of the normal pro-

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1) ' Patterns and Ranges ' in McIntosh, A., and Halliday, M. A. K., *Patterns of Language, Papers in General, Descriptive and Applied Linguistics*, Longmans, London, 1966, p. 198.

2) Peschman, H. (ed.), *The Voice of Poetry, an anthology from 1930 to the present day*, Evans Brothers Ltd., London, 1969, p. 74.

bable collocates [1] of 'miles of sand' in the place following 'around' such as 'barren lands', 'deserts', 'oases', 'palm-trees' . . etc., but the reader finds, instead, that the poet has created a new collocation, i.e.

'miles of sand + cups and plates'

for conveying the unity (i. e. meeting point) of the experience of love in two different settings; the first suggests far off countries and stretches of barren lands, and the second refers to a modern setting indicated in the poem by 'a coffee shop', 'the waiter', 'the radio waltz', in addition to 'glasses', 'chairs' and 'moving stairs'. Other examples of unusual collocations used by MacNeice are :

1. Glory to God in the Lowest [2]

2. Which, if I had the cowardice of my convictions, I certainly should do [3]

3. Only give us the courage of our instinct [4]

Dylan Thomas's poetry is also brimful with such unusual collocations which are suggestive of various images, and the study of which is interesting from the metaphorical point of view. The following characteristic

1) For this term, see p. 10 below.
2) MacNeice, L., *Autumn Journal*. Faber and Faber Ltd., London, 1949, p. 13.
3) Ibid., p. 44.
4) Ibid., p. 82.

collocations are taken from sixteen of his poems in Rodway's anthology 'Poetry of the 1930 s' :

> 'broke the grape's joy' , 'A grief ago', 'ropes of heritage' , 'the long voice of water' , 'Hands grumble on the door' , 'seventy years of stone', 'Once it was the colour of saying' , 'If my head hurts a hair's foot'.[1]

Lexical Set is the second theoretical category in this lexical framework. It accounts for the grouping of items which have a similar distribution in collocation. For instance, the word 'political' may occur in the same linguistic environment as 'affairs' , 'scheme', 'programme', 'principles', 'public', 'government' 'corruption'', 'disaster', and many other lexical items. The item under consideration, i.e. 'political' is termed the 'nodal item' or 'node' whereas the accompanying items, i.e. 'affairs', 'scheme' ..etc. are called the collocates of this item. Since these words have similar distribution in collocation, i.e. they have the same collocability, they constitute a 'lexical set'. In Colloquial Cairene Arabic, the word 'ʔiggumεa' (Friday) readily collocates with words and phrases like :

> 'ṣalaah' (prayer) in 'ṣalaat-iggumεa' (the Friday prayer) 'ʔilyatiima' (lit. orphan) in 'ʔiggumεa-lyatiima' (i.e. the last Friday in

1) See Rodway, A. (ed.), *Poetry of the 1930 s,* Longman's English Series, Longmans, London, 1967, pp. 148 - 157.

Ramadan), ' saaεa naḥs ' (an hour of bad omen) in ' yoom-iggumεa fiih saaεa naḥs ' (There is an hour of bad omen on Friday.), and ʔilḥaziina (lit. sad) in ʔiggumεa-lḥaziina (Good Friday).

The lexical items ṣalaah, ʔilyatiima, saaεa naḥs, and ʔilḥaziina constitute a lexical set. It may be noted, however, that the collocates of the same item differ across cultures, i.e. from one language to another. For example, the word ' Friday ' in English is habitually associated with items different from those associated with its fixed term equivalent in Arabic, viz. ' ʔiggumεa '. Friday collocates in English with such words as 'Good', ' Black ' ..etc.

The above examples may be tabulated as follows:

Nodal Item	Collocates (Lexical Sets)	Nodal Item	Collocates (Lexical Sets)
Political	affairs, scheme, programme, principles, public, government... etc.	ʔiggumεa	ṣalaah, ʔilyatiima, saaεa naḥs, ʔilḥaziina... etc.
Friday	Good, Black... etc.		

It may also be noticed that the collocates may be either contigious or discontigious to the nodal item, i.e. they may occur side by side with it or may be

separated from it by other items. Furthermore, the collocates may either follow the node or may precede it. [1]

Such lexical study cannot be accounted for by the rules of grammar, on the one hand, and is more 'observational and objective' than the referential criterion of meaning [2], on the other. The results, of course, depend upon the nature and length of the texts examined as well as on the extent of details required.

Grammatical Level

This level is concerned with the analysis of the syntactic structures and the types of sentences which are common in or distinctive of a writer's style. The analyst should be able to choose those grammatical features which characterize the style under consideration. One should admit that the process of selecting these features is, to a great extent, subject to the 'intuition' or 'internal feeling' of the critic [3], but we may argue that the selection will be confined to those features which distinguish a given writer from other writers, especially those which are frequent enough to constitute

1) For more details, see Sinclair, J. McH, 'Beginning the Study of Lexis', in *In Memory of J. R. Firth*, Op. Cit., p. 415 ff.

2) See Enkvist, N. E., Spencer, J. and Gregory, M. J., *Linguistics and Style*, Oxford University Press, London, 1965, p. 74.

3) Cf. *Investigating English Style*, Op. Cit., p. 12.

distinctive patterns common in this writer's style. For example, inversion of predicate or part of the predicate, especially in verbal sentences, is one of the grammatical characteristics common in Salah Abd-El-Sabour's poetry. His prepositional phrases are front-shifted in the sentence, then the verb and the subject follow. The following examples from 'riḥlatun fi-llayl' illustrate this point : (prepositional phrases are in italics)

1. *wa fi ẓalaam-illayli* yaɛqidu-ljanaaḥa ṣurratan mina-lḥanaan (In the dark he used to nestle his love under his wing.) [1]

2. *wa fi laylatin* ɛaada min ḥaqlih
(But one night he returned from the field.) [2]

3. *wa min ma'vtihi*-nba aqat ṣaḥwati
(And his death awakened me.) [3]

4. *wa fi ḥufratin* min ḥifaari-ṭṭariiq
wahabnaahu li-lʔarḍi bi-smi-nnabii
(And in one of the road's holes
We donated him to the earth in the name of the Prophet.) [4]

This feature is not regarded as distinctive in some other contemporary poets, say El-Bayyati, as we shall

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1) Abd-El-Sabour, S., *riḥlatun fi-llayli wa qaṣaaʔidu ʔuxra*, Op. Cit., p. 6.
2) Ibid., p. 104.
3) Ibid., p. 106.
4) Ibid., p. 106.

see in the second part of this essay.

Phonological Level

This comprises the study of the phonological features the writer makes use of, e.g.

1. repetition of certain consonants (such as sibilants, nasals, emphatic, non-emphatic ..etc.) or vowels in a given manner.

2. nature of syllables (open or closed).

3. quantity of syllables (short, medium, long).

4. the position, nature and quantity of the prominent syllable(s) [1]

5. elision, liaison, anaptyxis, alliteration, assonance.. etc.

6. prosodic features of stress, pitch, length and intonation , [2] and their relation to rhythm.

From this point, then, literary criticism should begin, for the statement of a writer's philosophy "would be almost impossible without a previous analysis of his language." [3] If the investigation of linguistic

1) See Firth, 'Sounds and Prosodies' in *Papers in Linguistics,* Op. Cit., pp. 128-130.

2) See Firth, 'Modes of Meaning', especially Section II, Ibid., p. 196 ff.

3) Ibid., p. 202.

features in a writer's style may constitute an end in itself for the linguist or stylistician, it may not be so for the literary critic whose task is to go beyond this analysis in quest of critical interpretation, artistic and aesthetic evaluation. But now that we have reached a sort of a common ground between linguistics and literary criticism, we can go a step further in the direction of 'objective' interpretation. We may pose this question : Is it really possible that we can establish or discover a relationship between the linguistic forms common in a certain style and the functions in which the writer employs them ? In other words, does a given writer use distinctive lexical, grammatical or phonological patterns in the expression of certain feelings or emotions (e.g. indignation, sadness, despair, joy, love, infatuation.. etc.. etc.) ? There is sufficient evidence to prove that this is possible in most cases. For example, in 'Autumn Journal' I have observed that McNeice resorts to a repetitive pattern of similar and grammatically correspondent phrases and sentences in order to express his bitterness and despair. The following examples validate this statement : (the repeated words / phrases / sentences are in italics)

1. But posters flapping on the railings tell the fluttered World *that Hitler speaks, that Hitler speaks* [1]

1) *Autumn Journal,* Op. Cit., p. 22.

2. And we think 'This *must be* wrong, it has happened before,
Just like this before, we *must be* dreaming; [1]

3. But now it seems futility, imbecility,
To be building shops when nobody can tell
What will happen next. *What will happen* [2]

4. And then a woodpigeon calls and stops but the wind continues
Playing its dirge in the trees, *playing its* tricks. [3]

5. Conferences, adjournments, ultimatums,
Flights *in the air*, castles *in the air*, [4]

6. But one — meaning I — *is bored, am bored* [5]

7. Why should I want to go back
To you, *Ireland*, my *Ireland* ? [6]

This pathetic note is correlated with a different stylistic device in, for example, El-Bayyati's poetry. He resorts to the frequent use of rhetorical questions (i.e. which expect no answer from the addressee)

1) Ibid., p. 22.
2) Ibid., p. 23.
3) Ibid., p. 24.
4) Ibid., p. 30.
5) Ibid., p. 32.
6) Ibid., p. 64.

to express the same feelings. In 'Kalimaatun laata-muut' the poet voices his grievances : honourable principles and values have been transgressed ; parasites have encroached on the sacred and inviolable grounds of poetry ; valour and integrity have become futile in our times ; envy and disasters pursue the poet and his beloved wherever they go ; and finally, death and fate have conspired to deprive him of his last and remaining hope : his son. These feelings of bitterness, loss and despair are correlated with the form of rhetorical questions, e. g.

1. maaðа εala - ʃʃuεaraaʔi law qaṭaεu
   yada - lmutaṭaffiliin

   (What will the poets lose if they cut off the hands of parasites ?) [1]

2. maaða εala - ʃʃuεaraaʔi law baṣaqu
   εala haaði - nnuεuuʃ

   (What will the poets lose if they spit on these coffins (i. e. thrones) [2]

3. maaða sayujdi-ssana
   min baεdi ʔan sammamuu
   fi ḥiqdihim xubzana

   (What use is Light

1) El-Bayyati, A., *Kalimaatun laatamuut*, Op. Cit., p. 14.
2) Ibid., p. 14.

When they have poisoned our bread
Out of malice.) [1]

4. maaða taquuliina ˀiða ɛudna ˀila-lwatan
walam najid hunaaka man yaɛrifuna
maaða taquuliina
ˀaya ɛuṣfuurata-ʃʃajan

(What will you say if we go back home
And find nobody who knows us there ?
What will you say,
Bird of Sadness ?) [2]

5. faˀayna yaa ḥabiibati-lfiraar
rifaaquna maatuu
walam yabqa siwa-ljidaar

(Where, my love, shall we escape ?
Our mates are dead
And nothing remained except the wall.) [3]

6. falima-rraḥiil
wa ˀanta fi ɛumri-lwuruud
yaa najma wa batina-ʃʃahiid
lima-rraḥiil

......

yaa qaysu yaa waladi
wa yaa ḥubbi-lˀaxiir, mata taɛuud

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1) Ibid., p. 32.
2) Ibid., p. 67.
3) Ibid., p. 68.

(Why have you departed
And you are (still) in the age of roses?
Martyr Star of our Rise,
Why have you departed ?

. . . . . .

Kais, my boy,
My Last Love, when will you come back)? [1]

— 2 —

In this section an attempt is made to investigate the distinctive features of Salah Abd-El-Sabour's riḥlatun fi-llayl (A Journey at Night) and Abd-El-Wahab El-Bayyati's kalimaatun laa tamuut (Words that Will not Die) on the hypothesis that these two anthologies are representative samples of their poetry. A more detailed and comprehensive study of the two poets will require reference to all their works.

Abd-El Sabour's riḥlatun fi-llayl contains eighteen poems among which there are such important and well-known poems as :

riḥlatun fi-llayl (A Journey at Night), ʔannaasu fi bilaadi (People in my Homeland), and ʔaḥlaamu-lfaarisi-lqadiim (Dreams of the Old Knight).

1) Ibid., p. 23.

The first feature that draws our attention in this collection is the poet's frequent use of certain lexical items that indicate his pessimism. His themes deal mostly with destruction, frustration, melancholy, boredom and desolation. The common occurrence of such items as :

ˀalmawt (death), ˀalḥuzn (sadness), ˀassaˀam (boredom), ˀalmasaaˀ (evening), ˀallayl (night), ˀaẓẓalaam (darkness) together with their derivatives (e.g. maata (he died), yamuutu (he dies, he is dying), ˀamuutu (I die, I'm dying), ḥaziin (sad), ˀaḥzaan (sorrows) etc.) intensifies this impression. It is noticeable that the frequency of occurrence of each lexical item varies from one item to another. It may be interesting to give the approximate number of occurrences of each item including its derivatives (frequency ordered) :

Lexical Item	Number of Occurrences
ˀalmawt (maata, yamuutu.. etc.)	49
ˀalmasaaˀ	27
ˀalḥuzn (ḥaziin, ˀaḥzaan.. etc.)	16
ˀallayl	14
ˀassaˀam	11
ˀaẓẓalaam	7

From the above table it is obvious that the poet uses words implying complete darkness such as ˀallayl and ˀaẓẓalaam less frequently than words implying partial darkness like ˀalmasaaˀ. This may indicate that the poet believes that there is still a glimpse of hope for himself and humanity. Thus, although the poet shouts in the poem entitled ˀaẓillu wa-ṣṣaliib (The Shadow and the Cross) :

ˀana-llaδi ˀaḥya bila ˀaamaad
ˀana-llaδi ˀaḥya bila ˀabɛaad
ˀana-llaδi ˀaḥya bila ˀamjaad

(I am he that lives without ends
I am he that lives without dimensions
I am he that lives without glories.) [1]

yet, he has his moments of joy represented in memories of his childhood, youth, love and poetry. The following lines reveal one of these moments :

ˀawaaḥidati fi-lmasaaˀi-lˀaxiir
ˀaluubu ˀila ɣurfati
wa yazḥamu nafsi-nbihaarun ɣariib
wa ˀanẓuru yaa fitnati li-ssamaaˀ
wa min baabiha-δδahabiyyi-ḍḍiyaaˀ
yuḍiiˀu-dduja bi-nhimaari-nnujuum
yunawwiru fi wajnatayha-ssalaam
wa taṣdaḥu ˀajraasuha bi-lfaraḥ

(My dear, in the last night,
I come back to my room

1) Riḥlatun fi-llayl, Op. Cit., p. 30.

A strange dazzlement overpowers me.
I look, my charm, at the sky
And through its golden shining gate
The night glimmers with falling stars
Peace lightens their cheeks
And their bells jingle with joy.) [1]

However, the sense of loss and triviality of life which permeates the poems in this collection is also indicated by his characteristic collocations. His riḥla (journey), for example, whether mental or sensuous, is associated with loss, darkness, and bad times. The word riḥla is thus collocated with :

ʔallayl (night), ʔ*a*ḍḍ*a*yaaɛ (loss, despair), ṭ*a*h*aa*r*a* (chastity), ʔazzamaan (time).

These collocates follow the nodal item. Likewise, the lexical item ḥabl (rope) collocates with words that imply silence, fear and boredom, e. g.

ʔ*a*ṣṣ*a*mt (silence), ʔalxawf (fear), ʔassaʔam (boredom).

There is only one collocate which differs in implication from the rest of the members of this lexical set, i. e. naɣam (melody, tones). All these members follows the node. The other usual collocations in the anthology can be represented in tabular form as follows : (the collocates are classified according to their form-class)

1) Ibid., p. 110.

Usual Collocations in riḥlatun fi-llayl

Nodal Item	Collocates (Lexical Sets)	Form-class	Nodal Item	Collocates (Lexical Sets)	Form class
baḥr/biḥaar	ʔalḥidaad (mourning),		yawm /	taafih (trivial),	
(sea / seas)	ʔalεadam(nothingness),		ʔalyawm	kaaðib (a liar, telling lies),	
	ʔalfikr (thought),	N.	ʔalʔayyaam	makruur (recurring, repeated),	
	ʔalmawt (death),		(day / the day / the days)	mawbuuʔ (infected),	Adj.
	ʔalqawl (saying, speech),			xawwaan (treacherous),	
	ʔalεagz (helplessness),			mariiḍa (sick, ill)	
	εamiiq (deep)	Adj.		ʔalɣaarib (setting)	
ḥuzn /	ɣariib (strange),			ʔalmamruura (bitter)	
ʔalḥuzn	ṯaquiil (heavy),			ʃiraak (traps)	N.
(sadness /	ṣamuut (silent),		zaman /	ʔalḥaqq-iḍḍaaʔiε (lost right),	N.
the sadness)	faadiḥ (grave),	Adj.	ʔazzaman /	ʔassaʔam (boredom),	
	masx (deformed),		zamaan /		
	ɣaamiḍ (vague),		ʔazzamaan	ʔalmaqiit (detested),	Adj.
	mustawḥaʃ (desolate)		(time / the time)	ʔaḍḍariir (blind)	
layl/ʔallayl	ʔalmuuhiʃ (dreary),		ʔaḍḍayaaε	riḥla (journey),	N.
(night /	ʔalʔaxiir (last),	Adj.	((sense of) loss)	ḥikaaya (story)	
the night)	ʔalkaʔiib (gloomy),				
	ẓalaam (darkness),	N.			

It is noticed that all the collocates in the above table follow the correlated node, except the members of the last set, i. e. riḥla and ḥikaaya, which precede it.

In addition to these familiar collocations, Abd-El-Sabour creates new and original collocations. He tends, on the whole, to reduce the use of unfamiliar collocations to a minimum. One of the prominent examples in the anthology is the following :

qad madda min ˀaktaafihi-lɣilaaẓi jiðεa
naxlatin εaqiim

(Lit. Lifting from his mighty shoulders a barren palm-tree trunk.) [1]

What the reader expects is that the word ˀaktaaf (shoulders) will be accompanied in the position that occurs between ˀalɣilaaẓ (mighty) and εaqiim (barren) by a member of a lexical set which produces collocations like :

madda min ˀaktaafihi-lɣilaaẓi jinaaḥan / min-qaaran / εunuqan / mixlaban — yadan / sayfan/ rumḥan / xinjaran ... (Lifting from his mighty shoulders a wing / a beak / a neck / a paw — a hand / a sword / a spear / a dagger ..etc.)

on the hypothesis that the poet is depicting the image of either a bird / beast of prey or a merciless giant / warrior, but the poet creates, instead, a new collocation which aims at the interaction in the reader's mind of two lexical sets: one comprises the items habitually associated with ˀaktaafihi-lɣilaaẓ (his mighty

1) Ibid., p. 8.

shoulders) such as jinaaḥ (a wing), minqaar (a beak), εunuq (a neck) ..etc., and the other comprises the items which are in habitual company of jiðεa naxlatin (εaqiim) ((a barren) palm-tree trunk) such as maqṭuuε (cut off), mutahaawii (fallen down), muḥaṭṭam (destroyed), maksuur (broken) ..etc.

The poet here succeeds in conveying his feelings of frustration and the futility of the pleasures of life by presenting to us this image of indomitable and overwhelming fate which spoils all the poet's hopes, expectations and desires, modest as they are :

wa fi liqaaʔina-ʔlaxiiri yaa ṣadiiqati
waεattini binuzhatin εala-ljabal
ʔuriidu ʔan ʔaεiʃa kay ʔaʃumma nafḥata-ljabal
laakinna haaða-ṭṭaariqa-ʃʃirriira fawqa
baabiya-ṣṣaɣiir
qad madda min ʔaktaafihi-lɣilaaẓi
jiðεa naxlatin εaqiim

(In our last meeting, my love,
You promised me a mountain picnic
I want to live to smell the mountain breeze
But this evil knocker on my small door
has lifted from his mighty shoulders
A barren palm-tree trunk.) [1]

Other examples of unusual collocations which occur in this collection are :

1) Ibid., p. 8.

1. wa fi ẓalaam-illayli yaεqidu-ljanaaḥa
   ṣurratan mina-lḥanaan
   (In the dark he used to nestle his love under his wing.)[1]

2. .... wa qad ʔaɣfat
   fi ṣadri baaqatu ʔazhaar
   (A bunch of flowers has dozed in my bosom.)[2]

3. ṭahaaratun bayḍaaʔu tunbitu-lqubuura
   fi maɣaawiri-nnadam
   (Lit. White chastity that grows graves in the caves of remorse.)[3]

4. jaarati maddat mina-ʃʃurfati ḥablan min naɣam
   (Lit. My neighbour has flung out a rope of melody from the balcony.)[4]

Beside these lexical features there are syntactic structures which mark off Abd-El-Sabour's poetry from that of his contemporary poets.

First, he favours the use of short nominal declarative sentences, the majority of which are affirmative. Such pithy statements reflect the quick rhythm of the poems, e.g.

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1) Ibid., p. 6.
2) Ibid., p. 18.
3) Ibid., p. 30.
4) Ibid., p. 112.

Affirmative sentences :

1. εaynaani xinjaraan (Two eyes like daggers.)
2. mawεidi-lm*a*ṣiir (My appointment is fate.)
3. haaða zamaanu-ssaʔam
   (This is the time of boredom.)
4. ʔall*a*fẓu ḥajar (The word is a stone.)
5. ʔall*a*fẓu maniyya (The word is death.)
6. haaða yawmun xawwaan
   (This is a treacherous day.)
7. ʔalʔ*a*rḍu baɣiyyun ṭ*aa*mi
   (The universe is a menstruous whore.)
8. ṣ*a*mtu-lʔaʃyaaʔi wisaadatuna
   (Silence of things is our pillow.)
9. Kawnukum maʃʔuum
   (Your world is sinister.)
10. ḥaniini ɣariib (My yearning is strange.)

Negative sentences :

1. laa εumq*a* li-lʔalam (There's no depth for pain.)
2. laa ṭ*a*εma li-nnadam
   (There's no taste for remorse.)

Secondly, one of the outstanding characteristics of his poetry is the use of indefinite nominal phrases which consist of three elements :

1. an indefinite noun in the first place followed by
2. either an indefinite noun in the genitive case or an indefinite adjective +
3. another indefinite adjective or noun. Examples are : (the nominal phrase is in italics)

kawajhi faˀrin mayyitin ṭalaasimu-lxuṭuuṭ
(N. + N. (genetive) + Adj.)
(A scribble, like the face of a dead rat.) [1]

dabiibu faxði-mraˀatin maabayna
ˀilyatay rajul
saˀam
(N. + N. + N.)
(The rubbing of a woman's thigh between a man's buttocks is boredom.) [2]

wa tamaṭṭat-irriˀataani fi *ṣadrin zujaajiyyin xarib*
(N. + Adj. + N.)

(And the lungs expanded in a broken glass chest.) [3]
We can add to these examples the phrase mentioned under unusual collocations above, i.e.

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1) Ibid., p. 8.
2) Ibid., p. 28.
3) Ibid., p. 92.

jiðɛa naxlatin ɛaqiim
(N. + N. + Adj.)

Thirdly, another distinctive feature of Abd-El-Sabour's poetry is his inversion of prepositional phrases in verbal sentences. The usual position of prepositional phrases in Classical Arabic is at the end of the sentence, following the verb, the subject, and the object (if there is any in the sentence), e.g.

1. ʔijtamaɛa ʔaɛḍaaʔu-lmuʔtamari fi-lqaaɛa
   (The members of the conference met in the hall.)
2. ʔuḥibbu-ssafara biṭṭaaʔira
   (I like travelling by air.)
3. ʔistaɛartu-lkitaaba min ṣadiiqi
   (I borrowed the book from my friend.)

but most of Abd-El-Sabour's sentences, especially verbal ones, are initiated by a prepositional phrase which consists of a preposition + a definite or an indefinite noun, then the verb, the subject (and the object) follow. The following examples illustrate this point : (the prepositional phrase is in italics)

1. wa *fi-ṣṣabaaḥi* yaɛqidu-nnudmaanu majlisa-nnadam
   (His boon companions will meet in the morning).[1]
2. *fi-lfajri* yaa ṣadiiqati tuuladu nafsi min jadiid
   (At dawn, my soul is reborn, my love.)[2]

1) Ibid., p. 10.
2) Ibid., p. 12.

3. *min taḥti mulaaˀatiha* ˀaxfatha ɛanna maaˀidatu-lˀifṭaar
   (The breakfast table hid it/them under its cloth.)[1]

4. *fi-ʃʃaariɛi* ɣaṭṭatha ˀawraaqu-lˀaʃjaar
   (The tree-leaves covered it/them in the street.)[2]

5. wa ɛ*inda* b*aabi qaryati* yajlisu ɛammi muṣṭafa
   (My uncle, Mustafa, sits at the gate of my village.)[3]

6. wa *fi masaaˀin* waahini-lˀaṣdaaˀi jaaˀahu ɛizriil
   (But one feeble echoing night the angel of death came to him.)[4]

7. wa *fi-ljaḥiimi* duḥrijat ruuḥu fulaan
   (The soul of Mr. X was rolled into Hell.)[5]

8. wa *fi-llayli* kuntu ˀanaamu ɛala ḥijri ˀummi
   (At nightfall I used to sleep in my mother's lap.)[6]

9. wa *fi-lxariifi* naxlaɛu-θθiyaab...
   (In autumn we would take our clothes off...)[7]

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1) Ibid., p. 74.
2) Ibid., p. 74.
3) Ibid., p. 84.
4) Ibid., p. 88.
5) Ibid., p. 88.
6) Ibid., p. 102.
7) Ibid., p. 154.

This characteristic has drawn my attention throughout the whole book. The poet rarely front-shifts prepositional phrases in his nominal sentences. For eleven verbal sentences containing inversion of this type in the last 84 pages of the book, only two nominal sentences are distinguished by this feature. In fact, this is another important feature which marks Abd-El-Sabour's style off that of other contemporary poets like El-Bayyati in whose poetry you scarcely find this type of inversion, especially in verbal sentences. Most of his verses follow the usual word order of form-classes in Arabic sentences, e.g. (the prepositional phrases are in italics)

1. ɛaada *min ɛaalamihi-lmuuḥiʃ* ...
   (He came back from his desolate world.) [1]

2. ʃiɛri jawaadun jaamiḥun jaɛdu
   biʃaarisihi-lḥaziin
   naḥwa-lyanaabiiɛi-lbaɛiida
   (My poetry is a restive horse running
   with his sad knight
   towards the far springs.) [2]

3. ʔaljibaalu maksuwwatun *biθθalji*
   wa-ssamaaʔu *bissuḥubi*
   (The mountains are covered with snow
   And the sky with clouds.) [3]

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1) *Kalimaatun laa tamuut,* Op. Cit., p. 7.
2) Ibid., p. 14.
3) Ibid., p. 46.

4. lam yazal ʔinsaanuna baasiman
li-lmawti fi ɛaʃiyyati-ṣṣalbi
(Our Man is still smiling in the face of death on the eve of Crucifixion.)[1]

5. taṣnaɛu fajra-lɣadi *fi-ddarbi*
(She is making the dawn of the future on the way.)[2]

This brings us to a brief discussion of El-Bayyati's stylistic devices. Prominent among these in the anthology, i.e. kalimaatun laatamuut, are :

i. the use of exclamatory forms which consist of *either* a - the exclamatory particle maa (what a..!) + the 1st form of a verb of the pattern ʔafɛal indicating surprise followed by a definite noun. These sentences sound like epigrammatic modes of expression, e.g.

   maa ʔawḥaʃa-lḥayaah
   (How desolate life is !)
   maa ʔabɛada-ṭṭariiq
   (How far the way is !)
   maa ʔaqalla-zzaad
   (How small the supply is !)

or b - the 'mourning' particle waa (waaw-innudba) + a definite nominal phrase implying sorrow for the poet's situation, e.g.

1) Ibid., p. 46.
2) Ibid., p. 47.

1. waa ḥasrata-ʃʃaaεiri fi xariifihi yuhaan
   (Woe for the poet when he is humiliated in his old age (lit. autumn)!)

2. waa ḥasrata-ʃʃaaεiri fi xariifihi tahṣuruhu-lʔaʃjaan
   (Woe for the poet when he is broken down by sadness in his old age.)

3. waa ḥasrata-ʃʃaaεiri
   ʔin qaamara ʔaw ɣanna maεa-ʃʃayṭaan
   (Woe for the poet if he gambles or sings with the Devil!)

ii. the frequent occurrence of vocative sentences formed from the vocative particle yaa / ʔaya (O...!) followed by a definite nominal phrase which usually refers to love or to an element of nature or to poetry, e.g.

1. yaa ḥubbiya-lmuxaḍḍaba bi-ddimaaʔ
   (O my Love which is coloured with blood.)

2. yaa ḥubbiya-lmuɣaamir
   (My venturesome Love.)

3. yaa ʔaswada-lεaynayn
   (You with black eyes)

4. yaa rafiiqata-ssafar
   (My travel-companion)

5. yaa barda-ṣṣaḥaari
   (Cold of deserts)

6. yaa xaytα-ḍḍiyaaʔ
(Thread of light)

7. yaa ṣabααḥana-ljadid
(Our new morning)

8. ʔaya ɛuṣfuurαta-ʃʃajan
(Bird of sadness)

9. yaa rαbbata-ʃʃiɛri-lkaðuub
(Goddess of false poetry)

iii. One of the most outstanding stylistic features in El-Bayyaati's poetry is that he defines his objectives, attitudes, emotions and morals in a negative way. A large number of his sentences and phrases are negative forms. Therefore, particles of prohibition and negation are common in his poems. For example, he addresses his heart by saying :

ya qαlbu laa tahrαm
(My heart, don't get old.) [1]

and invokes 'the Knight of Sadness' :

laa tadaɛni

. . . . . .

laa tadaɛni fi-ṣṣαqiiɛ
(Don't leave me

. . . . . .

1) Ibid., p. 14.

(Don't leave me in the frost) [1]

He then expresses his attitude towards human cause :

wa ʔinni lan ʔaxuuna
qaḍiyyata-lʔinsaani ʔinni lan ʔaxuun
(I will not betray
The human cause, I will not betray.) [2]

And in the poem entitled ʔalmasiiḥu-llaðii ʔuεiida ṣalbuh (The Christ who has been recrucified), El-Bayyaati enumerates the qualities which he despises for their incompatibility with his principles and morals:

1. wa ʔana lastu biṣuεluukin munaafiq
   (I'm not a weakling and a hypocrite.) [3]

2. wa ʔana lastu siyaasiyyan
   xaṭiiban
   fa-lmanaabiru
   ṭaradatni munðu ʔan ṣiḥtu biwajhi-nnaas
   "kalla ʔana aaʔir..."
   (I'm not a politician,
   A demagogue.
   The rostrums
   have driven me away since I shouted in the face of people
   "No! I'm a rebel...") [4]

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1) Ibid., p. 9.
2) Ibid., p. 16.
3) Ibid., p. 41.
4) Ibid., p. 41.

3. wa ʔana lastu bitaajir
yataɣanna biɛaðaabi-lbaʃariyyah
(I'm not a dealer
Who sings the torture of humanity.) [1]

There are also two series of lines with laa-initial in the two poems entitled ʔalqatalah (The Murderers) and ʔila tii ʔes ʔilyut (To T.S. Eliot) :

laa ʃams
laa nismata
ṭaṭruqu ʔabwaabana
(No sun
No puff of breeze
Knocks at our door.) [2]

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

laa faʔs
laa ṣayḥata
tuʃɛilu ʔaḥṭaabana
(No spade
No shout
Burns our wood.) [3]

laa ʃaaɛira ʔaffaaq
laa ɛuʃʃaaq
laa ʃuhadaaʔ

1) Ibid., p. 42.
2) Ibid., p. 34.
3) Ibid., p. 34.

laa qɑʈrɑta maaʔ
laa ʈɑɑḥuunah
fi haaði-lʔɑrɖi-lmalɛuunah
(No fraudulent poet
No lovers
No martyrs
No drop of water
No mill
In this accursed land.)[1]

iv. We may add to the preceding devices his frequent use of rhetorical questions when expressing his bitterness and despair. This device has been disscussed in the first part of the essay.[2]

In conclusion, I have already stated that from this point literary criticism may begin, and then goes in the direction of artistic and aesthetic appreciation, but the question still remains: Can we go beyond description, analysis and comparison to 'appreciation' and 'evaluation' without being subject to personal 'interpretation', personal appraisal, and even personal likings and dislikings? — A question to which stylistics has not yet found a satisfactory answer.

1) Ibid., p. 37.
2) See pp. 16 - 19 above.

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II. LANGUAGE AND THE THEORY OF CONTEXT



II. LANGUAGE AND THE THEORY OF CONTEXT

Definition of Language :

The common definition of language is that it is a mirror that reflects, or a means for expressing, communicating or exchanging ideas. Sapir defines language as :

> "a purely and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols." [1]

A more recent definition is that of Jesperson :

> "The essence of language is human activity—activity on the part of one individual to make himself understood by another, and activity on the part of that other to understand what was in the mind of the first." [2]

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1) Sapir, Edward, *Language*, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., New York, 1949, p. 8.

2) Jesperson, Otto, *The Philosophy of Grammar*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1963, p. 2.

But Malinowski[1] is of opinion that this wide-spread definition does not represent linguistic reality. In the course of his anthropological researches, especially among the primitive inhabitants of the Trobriand Islands who are Melanesian tribes living in Eastern New Guinea, he found out that language was not just a tool for the communication of ideas, but it was, first and foremost, part of a social concerted activity. He states in 'Coral Gardens and their Magic':

> "The fact is that the main function of language is not to express thought, not to duplicate mental processes, but rather to play an active pragmatic part in human behaviour. Thus in its primary function it is one of the chief cultural forces and an adjunct to bodily activities."[2]

He claims further that the moment the word is separated from the context of the activity which envelops it or from the situation in wich it is uttered, it becomes a void and meaningless word. Speech here, according to Malinowski, is equivalent to gesture and to motion. So, if we write down the words spoken among these people and treat them as a text divorced

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1) "Bronislaw Malinowski spent most of his life in England and found prominence there in the field of anthropology. Much of his work was in the South Seas, and it was there, working with the Trobriand islanders, that his interest in linguistic problems was aroused." See Dineen, F. P., *An Introduction to General Linguistics,* Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York, 1967, p. 299.

2) Malinowski, B., *Coral Gardens and Their Magic,* George Allen & Unwin Ltd., Second Edition, London, 1966. Vol. II, p. 7.

from its context of action and situation, the words would obviously mean nothing to us. [1] He provides us with examples such as the verbal rituals accompanying the choice of areas for cultivation, the tilling of the soil and the fixing of boundaries. We may argue that this conception is sound so far as Malinowski applies it to the problem of meaning in primitive languages [2] and to such situations as those mentioned above, though with some qualifications. There are all kinds of action that go on in any society without language activity at all, such as interior decoration, harvesting, mining, sifting grains, cooking... etc. But when he tries to apply this conception to language and language functions in general, it becomes objectionable owing to the emphasis it lays on concrete actions and situations, i.e. to its pragmatic nature :

> " I want to make it quite clear that I am not speaking here only of the Trobriand language, still less only of native speech in agriculture. I am trying to indicate the character of human speech in general and the necessary methodological approach to it. Every one of us could convince himself from his own experience that language in our own culture often returns to its pronouncedly pragmatic character. Whe-

1) Ibid., p. 8.

2) See Malinowski, B., 'The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages', Supplement I in Ogden, C. K., and Richards, I. A., *The Meaning of Meaning*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., London, 1923, pp. 451-510.

ther engaged in a technical manipulation, pursuing some sporting activity, or conducting a scientific experiment in a laboratory or assisting each other by word and deed in a simple manual task .... Words are part of action and they are equivalents to actions. " [1]

Translation :

In Malinowski's view, then, our study of language should be related to our study of other social and human activities. The implication of each phrase or sentence should be interpreted within the framework of its real cultural context. Language in this connection is a pattern of human behaviour which does not play just a secondary role in our life. It fulfills a functional role — a unique role unsubstitutable by that of any other human activity. In addition, individual words

> " are in fact only linguistic figments, the products of an advanced linguistic analysis. The sentence is at times a self-contained linguistic unit, but not even a sentence can be regarded as a full linguistic datum. To us, the real linguistic fact is the full utterance within its context of situation, " [2]

A corollary to this theory is that it is difficult to translate words from one language into another. The

1) *Coral Gardens and their Magic*, Op. Cit., pp. 8-9.
2) Ibid., p. 11.

wider the gap between two different cultures the more diffiicult it is to find literal verbal equivalents. Translation is only legitimate when it means the placing of linguistic symbols against the cultural background of a given society. It is not the substitution of one word by another, but it is the translation of whole contexts. "Such English words as 'sport', 'gentleman', 'fair-play', 'kindness', 'quaint', 'forlorn' — to mention only a few from a legion — are never translated in a foreign tongue ; they are simply reproduced." [1] It is difficult to translate such words adequately into other languages without contextualizing them, i.e. without setting these words in their proper context of culture by explaining the particular set of situations and circumstances in which they are used in the English society. Every culture is distinguished by certain unique aspects unavailable in other cultures. These aspects are "more openly, minutely or pedantically cultivated: sport in England, good cooking and love-making in France ; sentimentality and metaphysical profundities in Germany ; music, noodles and painting in Italy." [2]

Words which express moral or personal values differ in implication from one society to another. For instance, the word 'woman' addressed to a man in the Egyptian society is a term of obloquy, whereas it

1) Ibid., p. 12.
2) Ibid., p. 12.

may sound a term of praise to an Englishman's ear. Even within the one language the same linguistic forms may differ in use from one dialect to another in accordance with the context of culture correlated with these forms. For instance, in Lebanese Arabic the sentence

saɛyun maʃkuur (May your effort be rewarded.)
is used to congratulate a Moslem pilgrim on his safe return from the Holy Lands, whereas the same form is used in Egyptian Arabic to thank a person for coming to offer his condolence on the death of a relative or a friend. The term 'context of culture' is used here in its wide sense, i.e. a specific culture with its material equipments, social institutions and interests, beliefs and doctrines, customs and traditions, moral and aesthetic values.. etc. Malinowski widens this concept of context so that it may embrace "not only spoken words but facial expression, gesture, bodily activities, the whole group of people present during an exchange of utterances and the part of the environment on which these people are engaged." [1]

However, this lack of equivalence in translation across cultures is most apparent in idioms and proverbs. For example, common idioms in Cairene Colloquial Arabic such as

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1) Ibid., p. 22.

1. dayra ɛala ḥalli[1] ʃaɛraha
   (Lit. Going about with her hair loose, i.e. of loose manners.)

2. la liyya fi-ṭṭoor wa la fi-ṭṭiḥiin
   (Lit. I have neither in the ox nor in the ground grain, i.e. It is no concern of mine.)

3. sawwid wiʃʃina
   (Lit. He blackened our face, i.e. His conduct / result caused us embarrassment.)

4. laa ʔiḥim wa la dastuur
   (Lit. He neither coughed nor did he ask permission, i.e. He came in without permission / invitation.)

5. mayya min taḥti tibn (Lit. Water under a straw pile, i.e. He / She is a cunning person though he / she appears quiet.)

and common proverbs in Lebanese Colloquial Arabic such as :

1. ṭubb-iljarra ɛa tumma bitiṭlaɛ-ilbinti laʔumma
   (Lit. Turn the earthenware pot upside down, and the daughter will become like her mother.)

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1) A sequence of three consonants in close transition does not occur in Egyptian Colloquial Arabic. In order to avoid a combination of more than two consonants a short vowel is introduced between the second and third consonants. This epenthetic vowel will be written i in the transcription.

2. ya ˀaaxid-ilˀirdi̱ ɛaḥaalu rɑɑḥ-ilmaal wi ḍɑll-ilˀirdi̱ ˀbaalu

(Lit. you who married the ape for his richness, (know that) money went away and the ape remained facing you.)

— these and similar idioms and proverbs cannot be understood or translated into another language unless we refer to the cultural facts correlated with them, i.e. unless we put back these idiomatic and proverbial expressions in their cultural framework, whether this framework is interpreted in its wide sense mentioned above, or in its narrow sense as a specific situation with its constituent elements comprising the relevant persons, objects, incidents.. etc. [1]

Social Functions :

These idioms and proverbs perform certain social functions. Likewise, in every society there are fixed phrases and clichés that correlate with certain social contexts such as the exchange of greetings, courtesy,

1) J. Ellis distinguishes between 'wider situation' and 'immediate situation' : "wider situation... will be interpreted in the light of what is specific to a given culture and its language. ... immediate situation.. will be judged by what distinguishes one situation and its utterances from another... For example, the immediate situation of the utterance 'How do you do' could be said to be one of introduction, and the wider situation to involve a community assuming certain courtesies." See Ellis, J., 'On Contextual Meaning', in Bazell, C. E. and others (ed.), *In Memory of J. R. Firth,* Longmans, London, 1966, p. 82.

presentation of gifts, banquets and parties, friendly visits, congratulation on weddings and birthdays, condolence and sympathy on the loss of dear persons or valuable properties or in case of disease or accidents, flattery, terms of reference and address, nicknames..etc. These daily routine phrases act as verbal rites which the society sanctions and to which the members of this society attach great importance in the creation and promotion of social bonds. Besides, the society imposes moral penalty on those who do not conform to such 'rituals'. These phrases, however, are characterized by the fact that

1. they are more predictable than phrases used in the statement of facts, interrogation, giving instructions or those used in the expression of individual attitudes and emotions [1] such as anger, joy, abuse, pugnacity, reconciliation, confirmation.. etc., since they are closely associated with given situations. In addition, the responses evoked by these phrases are fixed and conventionally agreed upon by the individuals of a given society. For example, phrases like 'Good Morning!', 'How do you do?', 'Thank you', 'Cheers!', 'Beg your pardon'

1) Jesperson calls these phrases or sentences 'free expressions' as differentiated from 'formulas' or 'formular units' which are unchanged and unchangeable. See *The Philosophy of Grammar*, Op. Cit., p. 18.

have fixed responses habitually associated with them. The stimulus and response here may be regarded as one collocation.[1]

2. they have a binding effect in the sense that the production of one of these phrases puts the addressee under moral obligation to respond by a given answer or by one of alternative answers. In the Egyptian society, for example, when a host offers his guest something to eat or drink, say a cup of tea or a soft drink, the guest usually says :

wi leeh-ittaεab da (Why is (all) this trouble ?) which has to be accompanied on the part of the host by one of the following phrases :

taεabak *raaḥa* (Lit. Your trouble is comfort.) /
kullu min (f*a*ḍlit) xeerak (Lit. This is only part of (the remains of) your prosperity.) /
di ḥaaga miʃ ʔadd-ilmaʔaam (Lit. This is something which is not up to (your) status.)
di ḥaaga b*a*ṣiiṭ*a* (This is a small thing.) /
xeerak saabiʔ (Lit. Your prosperity has preceded ours.)

Such phrases constitute an inseparable part of the rites of visits, parties and weddings in every Egyptian house.

1) For this term, see pp. 9 - 10 above.

3. they reflect clearly the traditions, customs, moral values, beliefs, mentality and attitudes of individuals to life in general. Consider, for example, the following sets of proverbs current in our Egyptian society : (the proverbs are grouped according to the economic, social and moral domains correlated with them)

i. *Proverbs derived from agriculture and related terms :*

1. ʔardabi̱ mahuulak matiḥḍar keelu titεaffar daʔnak wi titεab fi ʃeelu
(Lit. The ardeb which is not yours, don't try to attend to its measuring ; for your beard will be covered with dust, and you will tire yourself by carrying it.)

2. baṣalit-ilmuḥbbi̱ xaruuf
(An onion given by the lover is (just as good as) a lamb.)

3. ḥumartak-ilεarga wa la-sʔaal-illaʔiim
((Rather use) your lame donkey, than ask a mean person (to lend you his good one).)

4. zayy-ilgimaal ʔilli yiḥritu ybaṭṭaṭu
(Like camels, what they plough they mess up.)

5. zayy-ilfiriik mayḥibbi̱ʃ ʃiriik
(Like firik (i.e. dry ears of corn), he does not like a partner.)

6. ʃ*agara* murra ṯiṯ*raḥ* liʔahli̱ *barra*
(A sour tree yields its fruit to strangers (rather than to relatives).)

ii. *Proverbs related to family bonds :*

7. ʔilli xallif ma matʃ
(He who leaves children behind him does not die, i.e as if he did not die.)

8. ʔaljannatu taḥta ʔaqdaam-ilʔummahaat [1]
(Heaven, i.e. Paradise, (lies) under the feet of the mothers, i.e. We should be obedient and kind to our mothers.)

9. ʔana wa-xuuya εalε-bni̱ εammi wa-na wibni̱ εammi εa-lɣariib
(I and my brother (stand) against my cousin, and I and my cousin (stand) against a stranger.)

10. gawwizha-bdiik wi nadiiha-tgiik
(Marry your daughter (even) to a cock, since (he makes her live so close to you that when) you call her she comes to you.)

1) Borrowed from Classical Arabic.

11. zetna fi-dʔiʔna
(Lit. Our oil is in our flour, i.e. Our interests will be kept among ourselves if we marry a relative.)

12. εumr-iddammi̱ ma yibʔa mayya
(Lit. Blood never turns to water, i.e. We cannot do without our blood-relations.)

13. ʔiḍḍifri̱ ma yiṭlaεʃi̱ m-illaḥm
(The nail does not come out of the flesh, i.e. Relatives cannot do without each other.)

iii. *Proverbs related to females :*

14. ʔiksar lilbinti̱ ḍilεi̱ yiṭlaε laha-tneen
(Break your daughter's rib, and two ribs will grow (instead).)

15. xayaal raagil wa la xayaal ḥeeṭa
(Lit. The shadow of a man is better than the shadow of a wall (said to convince a girl to get married even if she thinks that the suitor is not the proper man).)

16. ʔarrigaalu qawwaamuuna εala-nnisaaʔ [1]
(Men are the guardians of women, i.e. They have authority over women.)

17. ʔannisaaʔu naaqiṣaatu εaqlin wa diin [1]
(Women are deficient in (both) mind and religion.)

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1) Borrowed from Classical Arabic.

18. ʔaal ya garya-ṭbuxi yasiidi kallif
(A slave-girl carries out what her master orders her, since he will pay all the expenses (said by a wife whose husband asks her to do something expensive, e.g. a good meal, a party.. etc.).)

iv. *Proverbs of generosity, modesty and contentment :*

19. ʔiɛmil ṭayyib wi-rmiih-ilbaḥr
(Lit. Do good and throw it into the sea.)

20. ʔuknus beetak wuruʃʃu matiɛraf miin yuxuʃʃu
(Sweep your house and spray water in it, (for) you never know when someone would (unexpectedly) enter it.)

21. ʔilbaraka fi-llamma
(There is blessing in a large number, said during a meal, on a feast.. etc.)

22. ʔill-ybuṣṣi-lfooʔ yitɛab
(He who looks upwards gets tired, i.e. He who looks up at rich people makes his life miserable.)

23. ʔilmisaamiḥ kariim
(He who forgives is generous.)

24. bana ʔaadam ma yimlaaʃ ɛeenu ʔilla-tturaab
(Nothing fllls the eye of man except dust, e.i. Only death can end the greed of man.)

25. ʔiṭṭamaɛ yiʔilli maa gamaɛ
(Greed destroys what (the avaricious) have gathered.)

v. *Proverbs of destiny, fate and luck:*

26. ʔigri gary-ilwuḥuuʃ ɣeer rizʔak lam tuḥuuʃ
(Run (as fast as) wild beasts, but you shall get nothing except what has been predestined to you.)

27. ʔiḥyiini-nnihardạ wi mitni bukra
(Make me live today, and (then it does not matter if you) make me die to-morrow.)

28. ʔiṣrif maa fi-lgeeb yiʔtiik maa fi-lɣeeb
(Spend what is there in your pocket ; (God) shall send you (money) from the Unknown.)

29. ʔilḥazar ma yimnaɛʃ-ilʔadar
(Precaution does not prevent predestination.)

30. ʔilli-nkatab ɛa-lgibiin laazim tuʃuufu-lɛeen
(Lit. What has been written on the forehead, the eye must see, i.e. What is predestined must happen.)

31. ʔilli-f ʔismitak miḥarram ɛala ɣeerak
(What is allotted to you (by God) is prohibited for others.)

32. ʔilmaktuub ma minnuuʃ mahruub
(There is no escape from what is predestined.)

33. ʔilmanḥuus manḥuus wa law ḥaṭṭu ɛala baabu fanuus
(An unlucky person (remains unlucky) even if they hang a lantern in front of his house.)

34. ɣeer naṣiibak lam yiṣiibak
(You shall not get other than your (predestined) lot.)

35. ʔiraaṭ baxṯi wa la faddaan ʃaṭaara
(One kirat (i.e. 1/24 feddan) of luck is better than a (whole) feddan of cleverness.)

A quick glance at the above proverbs will reveal, among other things, a society whose economy was mainly based on agriculture ; the sacredness of family bonds; the inferior status of woman ; generosity, modesty, courtesy, affability, toleration and contentment; belief in fatalism, lot, fortune and luck.

Phatic Communion and Creative Effect of Words :

The social function of language becomes clearer in that use which does not aim at communicating any ideas or implication. It is a purely social function

according to which certain people exchange language in given situations which have no relation to the verbal activity, e.g. when some Egyptian farmers sit around a fire in front of one of the village huts after the day's work is over and exchange idle talk, or when some house-wives sit in one of their neighbours' apartment to chatter or gossip together while knitting or peeling vegetables. We may notice that the meaning of words and phrases exchanged in such gatherings has no relation to what goes on at the moment, i.e. it cannot be related to the behaviour of speaker or addressee or to the work in hand. What is the objective, for example, of such phrases as 'How are you?', 'Nice day to-day' or Egyptian Arabic phrases such as: ʔ*a*ll*a*h ʔinta hina (Gosh! Are you here?) or εala feen (Lit. Where are you going? (said when coming across an acquaintance in the street.))
People exchange such phrases, not for the purpose of seeking information or the expression of any ideas, but for the creation and strengthening of social ties. Malinowski calls this type of language function 'Phatic Communion':

> "There can be no doubt that we have here a new type of linguistic use ... a type of speech in which ties of union are created by a mere exchange of words... words in Phatic Communion.. fulfil a social function and that is their principal aim, but they are neither the result of intellectual reflection, nor do they necessarily

arouse reflection in the listener. Once again we may say that language does not function here as a means of transmission of thought." [1]

We may add that such situations are verbally saturated, i.e. the situation consists only of what happens verbally. Words here have not the power of creating action.

On the other hand, language has its utmost pragmatic effect in two peaks :

1. indirectly in the spiritual and religious functions correlated with the prevalent beliefs in a given society, such as "magical formulae, sacramental utterances, exorcisms, curses and blessings and most prayers." [2]

or 2. directly in military orders in battles, giving instructions, e.g. by the captain of a ship or an aeroplane, and cries of help. Such verbal acts "are as powerful in modifying the course of events as any other bodily act." [3]

Language in such situations releases action ; it either binds people to a specific line of action, or it may free them from certain obligations in order to

1) 'The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages', Op. Cit., p. 478.

2) *Coral Gardens and Their Magic*, Op. Cit., p. 52.

3) Ibid., p. 53.

impose others. The consequences may be fatal or pleasant :

> "You utter a vow or you forge a signature and you may find yourself bound for life to a monastery, a woman or a prison. You utter another word and you make millions happy, as when the Holy Father blesses the faithful. Human beings will bank everything, risk their lives and substance, undertake a war or embark on a perilous expedition, because a few words have been uttered. The words may be the silly speech of a modern 'leader' or prime minister ; or a sacramental formula, an indiscreet remark wounding 'national honour', or an ultimatum. But in each case words are equally powerful and fateful causes of action." [1]

Context of Situation :

Such beliefs as to the nature of language and the relation between utterance and context have led Malinowski to formulate his theory of the 'Context of Situation'. He holds the view that an utterance and the situation in which it is used are interwoven. The setting up of contexts of situations is essential for the explanation of the function of language in its natural setting. In 'The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages' he says : ".. utterance and situation are bound up inextricably with each other and the context of situation is indispensable for the understanding of

1) Ibid., p. 53.

the words." [1] Accordingly, the study of the meaning of a word or phrase is not the result of mere negative contemplation of this word/phrase, but it is the result of the analysis of the sum of its uses within a given cultural framework.

Malinowski's theory is analogous to that of Wittgenstein (1889-1951) in his 'Philosophical Investigations'. Wittgenstein believes that the meaning of a word lies in its use. He states : "one cannot guess how a word functions. One has to *look at* its use and learn from that." [2] He also compares the use of various patterns of language in speech behaviour to the various games controlled by certain rules :

> "the question "What is a word really ?" is analogous to "What is a piece in chess?... in philosophy we oftem *compare* the use of words with games and calculi which have fixed rules..." [3]

However, although Malinowski's theory of context proved adequate for his purposes, i.e. for working on native languages and studying primitive societies, yet, from the linguist's standpoint, its pragmatic character makes it inadequate as a theoretical framework wor-

1) 'The Problem of Meaning', Op. Cit., p. 467.

2) Quoted from Dixon, R. M. W., *What is Language ?*, Longmans, London, 1966, p. 71.

3) Ibid., pp. 70 - 71.

kable in the statement of linguistic facts in general. Firth's criticism is relevant here :

> "He (Malinowski) seems to imagine that there is such a thing as the 'existence' of the brute 'fact', independent of and prior to any statement of fact... There is belief in the 'concrete situation', the 'situation of action' in which the utterance is 'directly embedded'... the word 'utterance' seems to have had an almost hypnotic suggestion of 'reality' which often misleads him into the dangerous confusion of a theoretical construct with items of experience." [1]

It was left to Firth to provide this theoretical construct. He has developed the application of the concept of context of situation in descriptive linguistics in a more abstract and general form as one of several levels in linguistic analysis, all of which should be adequately stated. It serves as a framework to be applied to language events in the social process. It consists of a set of related categories "at a different level from grammatical categories, but rather of the same abstract nature." [2] This context varies according to the nature of the text available. "Its categories are applied to the actual environment and provide the means whereby

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1) Firth, J.R., 'Ethnographic Analysis and Language with reference to Malinowski's Views', in Palmer, F. R. (ed.), *Selected Papers of J. R. Firth 1952-59*, Longmans, London, 1968, p. 154.

2) Firth, J. R., 'Personality and Language in Society', in *Papers in Linguistics 1934-1951*, Oxford University Press, London, 1964, p. 182.

in each individual case the features relevant to the functioning (meaning) of the utterance and its parts may be singled out for attention." [1] According to Firth, a context of situation for linguistic investigation will be a study of the internal relations of the following categories :

A. The relevant features of participants: persons, personalities.

   (i) The verbal action of the participants.

   (ii) The non-verbal action of the participants.

B. The relevant objects.

C. The effect of the verbal action. [2]

Let us give one or two examples to illustrate this concept. The use of the phrase ʔallaa - yɛawwaḍ ɛaleek (May God compensate you.) differs in Lebanon from its use in Egypt. This difference relates to difference of situation as follows : (only the relevant elements of context are mentioned)

In Lebanon :

A. X and Y are a seller and a buyer.

   (i) Y wants to purchase a certain commodity from X. He asks X :

   biʔaddeeʃ haida (How much is this ?)

1) Robins, R. H., *General Linguistics, an Introductory Survey*, Longmans, London, 1964, notes to Chapter 1, p. 42.

2) 'Personality and Language in Society', Op. Cit., p. 182.

They start to bargain till they agree as to a suitable price.

(ii) X hands the commodity over to Y and charges the price saying :

ʔallaa - yεawwaḍ εaleek (May God compensate you.)

B. A shop or a stall for selling merchandise.

C. Y may go immediately after the verbal event.

In Egypt :

A. X and Y are two relatives, friends or acquaintances.

(i) X is informed that Y is grieved. He tries to console him, and sympathizes with him by saying :

ʔallaa - yεawwaḍ εaleek

This may be followed by another phrase such as :

ma - tzaεεalʃi̲ nafsak

(Don't be grieved.)

or ʃiddi̲ ḥeelak

(Try to endure.)

or kullina laha '

(i.e. All of us are predestined to the same fate.)

B. The death of one of Y's members of the family or one of his relatives.

C. Y may keep silent or answers by a phrase such as :

ʔilḥamdu li-llah

(Praise be to God (for whatever happens).)

or ʔiʃʃaddi̲ ɛala-llɑ

(May God help me to endure.)

This element collocates with the sentence ʃiddi̲ ḥeelak mentioned above.

It may be noticed that all these elements of the context may not be available, so one or more may be singled out for attention. For example, if a Lebanese says ʔana rɑɑyiḥ-iʃʃaam (Lit. I'm going to Syria), the most important element in the situation is the place where the verbal event occurs. If it takes place in Beirut, for instance, then the speaker means 'Damascus', but if it takes place in Bagdad or Cairo, then the speaker means either 'Syria' or 'Damascus'. Likewise, if an Egyptian says rɑɑyiḥ mɑṣr (Lit. I'm going to Egypt.), the meaning depends on the place. If the speaker is in Alexandria, for example, then he indicates that he is going to 'Cairo', but if he is in Damascus or Beirut, then he is leaving for 'Egypt', which may be followed, on the part of the addressee, by the question :

rɑɑyiḥ-ilqɑɑhirɑ walla-skindiriyya

(Are you leaving for Cairo or Alexandria ?)

We may conclude from this that there is no 'absolute meaning' for many words, phrases and terms in each language. A clearer example in this respect is the use of the word ʔ*a*bb (Lit. father) in different situations in our Egyptian society :

(i) *In Sharqiya Province* (Lower Egypt)

1. y*aa*-b*a* (Addressing one's father or father-in-law)
2. y*aa*-b*a* + a proper noun (Addressing one's uncle (on the father's side))
3. y*aa*-b*a* + ḥajj (one who has gone to pilgrimage in the Holy Lands) + a proper noun (Addressing either an elder relative or a close friend of the family)
4. y*aa*-b*a* + ḥajj + a proper noun + a nickname (An *adult* addressing an elder friend of the family.) [1]

ii. *In Upper Egypt :*

ʔabu (the *son* of, Lit. the father of) in, e.g.
ɛali ʔabu ɛuṣm*aa*n (i.e. Ali, the son of Osman)

iii. *In Cairo and other places :*

ʔabu (the father of) in, e.g
ɛali ʔabu ɛuṣm*aa*n (Ali, the father of Osman, i.e. not of Ahmad, for example.)

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1) For this and similar examples, see Badawi, El-Said M., '*ya*'-*Particles in the Egyptian Dialect of El-Nakhas (Sharqiya Province)*, an unpublished M. A. thesis, University of London, 1960.

iv. *Nicknames and playful titles of address :*

ʔabu ɛali (a nickname for Hassan, Lit. Ali's father)

ʔabu ḥaggaag (a nickname for Yousif, Lit. Haggag's father)

ʔabu xaliil (a nickname for Ibrahim, Lit. Khalil's father)

ʔabu ɛaffaan (a nickname for Osman, Lit. Affan's father)

v. *Various appellations :*

ʔabu-draaɛ (One with a broken arm. Lit. the father of an arm)

ʔabu r*a*seen (One with an abnormally big head, Lit. the father of two heads)

ʔabu rigli masluuxa (a term referring to an imaginary creature used by illiterate people to frighten naughty children, Lit. the father of a scorched leg)

ʔabu galambu (a kind of crab, Lit, Galambo's father)

ʔabu *faṣaaḍa* (a species of bird, Lit. Fasada's father)

Where is, then, the 'absolute meaning' which distinguishes the word ʔ*abb*, and how can a person related to a different culture understand its meaning unless we point out the relation between the participants and objects involved as well as the specific social values attached to this relation ?

Finally, if we take into account the study of context in linguistics, it will become a science really concerned with language as a meaningful human behaviour in a given society, not as mere conventional symbols. Both Malinowski and Firth have contributed in encouraging the student of linguistics who has till recently concentrated his attention on the phonological, grammatical and lexical aspects of language, to take into consideration the correlated situations with their various components. The theory of language functions in contexts of situation is one of the significant theories that will solve many of the problems raised by the statement of meaning which has been held as "the weak point in language-study"[1].

1) Bloomfield, L., *Language*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1962, p. 140.

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III. ENGLISH POETRY IN THE NINETEEN-THIRTIES :

A STUDY IN AUDEN'S "POEMS" AND MACNEICE'S "AUTUMN JOURNAL".



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— 1 —

Poetry and the Spirit of the Age :

Before revealing the distinctive features of modern English poetry up to and including the 1930 s, it is apt to refer briefly to the political, intellectual, social and moral changes which have affected direcly or indirectly the writing of new poetry. Every epoch in world history is characterized by certain common factors and influences which may not be available in other epochs. These form the 'Climate of Opinion' or the 'Zeitgeist' of this period :

> "But there must be a resemblance, which does not depend upon their own will, between all the writers of any particular age. They cannot escape from subjection to a common influence which arises out of an infinite combinations of

> circumstances belonging to the times in which they live ; though each is in a degree the author of the very influence by which his being is thus pervaded... And this is an influence which neither the meanest scribbler nor the sublimest genius of any era can escape ;.. "[1]

The modern era is no exception. The poet, qua artist, reflects by necessity all or some of the changes that come over his society, since art is a mirror to the mind of the artist and to his relationship with life that is brimful with various activities and events around him. It is noticeable that in the first three or four decades of the 20th century radical changes in politics, sociology, human beliefs and modes ef behaviour, ideologies, science and technology have taken place.

In the sphere of politics, the world has been greatly affected by the outbreak of two disastrous wars which left behind in the minds of people impressions of discontinuity, living under the threat of extermination, bitterness, despondency and loss. In addition, people were disillusioned in the false and deceitful slogans and clichés that the leaders of the two wars used to reiterate everywhere. These feelings were evident in the satiric and at times cynical attitudes that

1) Hutchinson, T. (ed.), Shelley's 'Preface to the Revolt of Islam' in *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, Oxford University Press, London, 1952, p. 35.

pervaded the writings of the authors of this era such as the essays and novels of Aldous Huxley, the novels of Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, the poetry of T. S. Eliot and other contemporaneous poets like C. Day Lewis, W. H. Auden, L. MacNeice and Stephen Spender. This phase has also witnessed the birth and development of Communism, on the one hand, and Fascism, on the other. Both movements deny the right of the individual and put his activities at the mercy of the state and in the service of its wheel — doctrines that are fully repudiated by the 'individuality' of the artist.

From the intellectual standpoint the poets of the modern era have been greatly influenced by the discovery of new philosophical theories which have thrown more light upon the nature of man's mind, and changed the writers' concepts about time and life. This change dates back approximately to the publication of William James' book 'Principles of Psychology' (1890), and to the writings of S. Freud and H. Bergson. Bergson called for the application of James and Freud's philosophical theories in literature, and he himself has revolutionized the concepts of 'realism' and 'time', and asserted the importance of spiritual values in his works. In this connection William James says :

> "Every definite image in the mind is steeped and dyed in the free water that flows round it. The significance, the value of the image is all in this halo or penumbra that surrounds and

escorts it.... Consciousness does not appear to itself chopped up in bits.... It is nothing jointed; it flows... Let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life." [1]

James means that life is ever-changing around us, and the consciousness of man is part of this continually renewed 'stream'. The experience of man, then, is the awareness of the real time which is not a mere arrangement of sequences of moments, but the steady flow of the past through the present into the future. In other words, time should be dealt with qualitatively not quantitatively. Hence, the traditional treatment of human experience in literature in terms of time sequence has given way to new techniques of 'emotional' sequence or 'free association', i.e. the juxtaposition of superficially diverse and unconnected images in order to convey the underlying unity of experience. Take, for example, the following quotation from MacNeice's poem 'Meeting Point' :

"Time was away and somewhere else,
There were two glasses and two chairs
And two people with the one pulse
(Somebody stopped the moving stairs) :
Time was away and somewhere else.

---

1) Allen, W., *The English Novel*, Penguin Edition, London, 1965, p. 345 (quoted from Isaacs, *An Assessment of Twentieth Century Literature.)*

And they were neither up nor down,
The stream's music did not stop
Flowing through heather, limpid brown,
Although they sat in a coffee - shop
And they were neither up nor down.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

The camels crossed the miles of sand
That stretched around the cups and plates ;
The desert was their own, they planned
To portion out the stars and dates :
The camels crossed the miles of sand.

Time was away and somewhere else.
The waiter did not come, the clock
Forgot them and the radio waltz
Came out like water from a rock :
Time was away and somewhere else." [1]

In this poem the setting of the events is a modern coffee - shop with its characteristic formica - topped tables and loud music coming out of a radio ; in the background and at the periphery of the consciousness of two lovers, the 'two people with one pulse', there is an escalator which has stopped momen-

1) 'Meeting Point' in Peschmann, H. (ed.), *The Voice of Poetry, an Anthology from 1930 to the present day*, Evans Brothers Ltd., London, 1969, pp. 74-75.

tarily. The transition from this modern frame to a completely different and distant image of camels crossing miles and miles of deserts 'somewhere else' annihilates time. It stops not only the 'escalator' of time, but also the whole clock. The contemporary poet is aware of both experiences which may be happening simultaneously. He conveys to us the eternity and timelessness of one moment of love by unifying the two apparently different experiences.

In addition, Freud's findings concerning psychoanalysis led to the belief in the presence of a sub-conscious region in man's mind, and to the belief that human personality is greatly affected by the joint action of the conscious and the sub-conscious. Modern literature is undoubtedly indebted to Freud's theories which have asserted the importance of individualism and opened new vistas of experience for poets, novelists and dramatists alike. Modern poets like Auden, Spender and MacNeice have included in their poems new psychological experiences unheard of before in any other poetry.

The social and religious changes in this period are also noteworthy. Industrial changes brought about the disintegration of old patterns of culture which were "based on an agricultural community in which poor and wealthy were alike concerned, and on a Church which bore a vital relation to the State. Par-

allel with this, and related to it, there has been a decay of the old moral and religious order, and a change in the basis of education, which has become more and more strictly scientific. Religion and classical learning, which once provided myths and legends symbolizing the purposes of society and the role of the individual have declined.." [1] Consequently, the grip of old religious beliefs over people's minds has either loosened or has been replaced by a spirit of scepticism; the sacred family ties and the unity of domestic life round which the existence of the members of old communities used to centre have broken up. The absence of such spiritual 'ballast' and cultural framework which can protect the poet from boredom and despair has resulted in the prevalence in modern poetry of a sarcastic, cynical and analytic spirit. Besides, the new scientific and technological discoveries have inspired the modern poets with the idea of experimenting with new technical innovations instead of merely concentrating on the process of artistic creation. Poetry has ceased to be merely a process of 'inspiration' or even 'emotion recollected in tranquility'; it has become a process which is partly conscious and partly unconscious on the part of the poet. Eliot writes about the poetic experience :

1) Roberts, Michael (ed.), *The Faber Book of Modern Verse*, Faber and Faber, London, 1954, pp. 9 - 10.

> "For it is neither emotion, nor recollection, nor, without distortion of meaning, tranquility. It is a concentration, and a new thing resulting from the concentration, of a very great number of experiences which to the practical and active person would not seem to be experiences at all; it is a concentration which does not happen consciously or of deliberation. These experiences are not 'recollected', and they finally unite in an atmosphere which is 'tranquil' only in that it is a passive attending upon the event. Of course this is not quite the whole story. There is a great deal, in the writing of poetry, which must be conscious and deliberate." [1]

It is also noticeable that the modern means of communication and mass media have shortened distances between far and different places. The modern poet has become as familiar with the urban regions as with the rural ones, hence the juxtaposition in his poetry of the description of ugly aspects of town life such as unemployment and moral disintegration side by side with the recital of tender pastoral songs. The transition from one to the other is often abrupt and intended to point out the sharp contrast between the two aspects whatever ambiguity and vagueness this transition may cause to the reader of modern poetry.

In order that the poet may be able to convey and express all this modern content and outlook

1) Eliot, T. S., 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' in Hayward, J. (ed.), *T. S. Eliot, Selected Prose,* Penguin Books, 1965, p. 29.

he should use modern techniques and new moulds. A change in content necessitates a corresponding change in form, since there is no dichotomy between both ; they are one synthetic whole. It is both impractical and undesirable to spin Crimplene threads, for example, by old spinning-wheels which were used two centuries ago. These new techniques and forms aim at the assimilation and representation of contemporary experience — an experience which is distinguished from that of older generations by greater self-consciousness, more complex and diverse experiments, and a deeper poetic vision. This is a natural result of progress, development, and accumulation of heritage and experiences and traditions throughout the ages. But, when all is said, we ought to be reserved and cautious in our judgment on modern poetry. The new techniques and modes of expression which constitute the essence of poetic experience in a number of good poets are, in some minor poets, nothing but superficial stylistic devices by means of which they imitate the major poets. They often subordinate poetic sincerity to harmony with the modern movement. They even affect unnecessary complexity and vagueness in the expression of a simple subject-matter, which may baffle the contemporary reader and make him lose faith in the good and the bad poets alike.

Dilemma of the Modern Poet :

Before the new poetry could stand on firm ground

in Western Europe, the modern poet had undergone a psychological crisis. After World War I the poet, always sensitive to his age, found that he was living in a morbid and unbalanced society. On the one hand, he was well aware of his individualism as a result of his acceptance of modern psychology ; on the other, he was conscious of the urgent need felt by his society for a human social organism who could restore healthy intercommunication and relations among people to their pre-war condition and help in establishing a society based on the principles of love and peace, i.e. a need for 'social awareness' versus both individualistic and 'ivory-tower' spirits. The Western poet became dissatisfied with the teachings of D. H. Lawrence about individualism in spite of their apparent influence on 20th century literature. The poet lost faith in these teachings for their futility and failure in the creation of a wholesome and sane society around this individual nucleus, apart from the fact that Lawrence himself was mentally diseased and bordering on insanity. When the poet tried to look in the other direction, he was at first attracted by Communism which called for revolution for life's sake. Although this was the greatest attempt for the elevation of the human being to the utmost of his potentialities through the control of his environment, yet the poet was not convinced by this attempt by virtue of its implied hazards of exposing individual freedom to restrictions and domina-

tion for security considerations and the sake of the whole. In addition to this conflict in the poet's mind between individual education and communal or collective economic domination, the poet was faced by a difficult choice between the old to which his soul and heart were attached and the new which stimulated both his intellect and imagination. In such situation, the choice of themes, their representation, and even the finding of adequate expressions became a problem :

> "It is a terrific problem that faces the poet to day—a world that is so in transition from a decayed culture toward a reorganization of human evaluations that there are few common terms, general denominators of speech, that are solid enough or that ring with any vibration or spiritual conviction. The great mythologies of the past (including the Church) are deprived of enough façade even to launch good raillery against. Yet much of their traditions are operative still—in millions of chance combinations of related and unrelated detail, psychological reference, figures of speech, precepts, etc. These are all part of our common experience and the terms, at least partially, of that very experience when it defines or extends itself." [1]

The following lines from Auden's "Poems" reveal that the poet is conscious of his critical situation while he is feeling for a firm ground to stand upon

1) Roberts, Michael (ed.), *Ths Faber Book of Modern Verse*, Op. Cit., p. 26.

and seeking a standpoint from which he can watch life and events around him. The conflict in his mind is between a nostalgic feeling towards the past and an awareness of responsibility towards the present :

> "A long time ago I told my mother
> I was leaving home to find another :
> I never answered her letter
> But I never found a better.
> Here am I, here are you :
> But what does it mean? What are we going to do?" [1]

Notice the note of rush and worry of the poet's thoughts in this poem. This note is expressed by the terseness of the opening line of the whole poem :

> "Its no use raising a shout." [2],

by the frequent occurrence of mono-syllabic words such as : use, shout, cut, right, out... etc. [3], and by the repetition of the two rhetorical questions at the end of each stanza :

> "But what does it mean ? What are we going to do ?" [4]

The attitude adopted by the poet is that of ironical refusal of commonplace things. He is after

1) Auden, W. H., *Poems*, Faber and Faber, London, 1950, Poem IX, p. 52.
2) Ibid., p. 52.
3) See Poem IX, Ibid., pp. 52-53.
4) Ibid., pp. 52-53.

more serious things like peace, love and reconstruction towards which he can discharge his responsibility as a man and as a poet :

> "No, Honey, you can cut that right out.
> I don't want any more hugs ;
> Make me some fresh tea, fetch me some rugs.
>
> . . . . . .
> . . . . . .
>
> A bird used to visit this shore :
> It isn't going to come any more.
> I've come a very long way to prove
> No land, no water, and no love." [1]

Tradition and Contemporaneity :

Thus, the contemporary poet, as well as any other contemporary artist, feels that he bears upon his shoulder a serious responsibility. Deep in his conscience he is aware of the heritage of past ages, given all this vast historical, literary, scientific and psychological information about it. Eliot calls this 'Tradition' :

> "It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to anyone who would continue to be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year ; and the historical sense

1) Ibid., pp. 52-53.

> involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order." [1]

In addition, the poet cannot escape from his contemporaneity with his local and world environment, and the zeitgeist in which he lives. The poet, then, finds it incumbent upon him to represent or reflect in his poetry this highly complex pattern which comprises simultaneously the 'historical sense' and the sense of contemporaneity', i.e. the feeling that many things happen at the same time. Such feeling may lead either to utter confusion or to the search for a kind of unity underlying this diversity ; and the modern artist has to adopt one of two alternative modes of expression in order to represent this huge pile of heritage : excessive expansion or excessive compression. It was not a coincidence that the two modes were used at the same time in post-war years. James Joyce chose the first method and pushed it to its furthest in 'Ulysses'. This novel comprises more than a quarter of a million words and depicts the life of the hero within twenty four hours. One year after the publica-

1) Hayward, J. (ed.), *T. S. Eliot, Selected Prose*, Op. Cit., pp. 22-23.

tion of 'Ulysses' Eliot concentrated in 'The Waste Land' all his comments on Western civilization with its old and modern societies in a poetic mould which comprises not more than four hundred lines. Eliot finds out that this concentrated form is required for the expression of the awareness of a varied and huge tradition ; and poetry alone, by the use of word, rhythm and allusion, can reveal an experience which goes beyond the boundaries of place and time to universality and permanence.

The technique most adequate to convey this experience is the 'stream of consciousness' or 'free association' technique which is based mainly on the presentation of sequences of poetic images among which there is no logical connection, on the surface at least. It is roughly similar to that adopted by the psycho-analyst when he tries to discover the inner secrets of a person by asking him to answer every item on a word-list by the first word that occurs to his mind. This technique which Eliot has perfected is prevalent among the vast majority of modern poets. The example I have quoted from MacNeice's 'Meeting Point' is an example in point. [1] Beside this technique, the following features which are summed up by Michael Roberts distinguish modern poetry :

---

1) See pp. 76-78 above.

1. Use of the language of common speech, with the employment of the 'exact' word, not the merely decorative word.

2. The creation of new rhythms — as the expression of new moods. The belief that the individuality of a poet may often be better expressed in 'Free-verse' than in conventional forms. This does not mean that 'Free-verse' is the only method of writing poetry.

3. Absolute freedom in the choice of subject.

4. The presentation of an image. Modern poets are not a school of painters, but they believe that poetry should render particulars exactly and not deal with vague generalities.

5. The production of poetry that is hard and clear, never blurred or indefinite.

6. The belief that concentration is the very essence of poetry. [1]

We may also add that the modern poet has ceased to address one side only of the human-being, as was the case with classical or romantic poetry, but he is addressing man's mind, emotion and morals in the attempt to convey to us his entire experience and

1) Roberts, M. (ed.), *The Faber Book of Modern Verse*, Op. Cit., p. 15.

represent it from all its aspects. It is an 'all-round' poetry which is unaffected, inartificial and of indivisible components.

Furthermore, modern poets believe that poetry is not a luxurious commodity, but has a fundamental rôle to play in its society. Traditional poetry was, in their view, a kind of entertainment in a sharply stratified society in which the wealthy members of the high classes lived luxuriously without lofty ideals or objectives. But these young poets believe in a socialist society in which the working classes take their proper position and share, and the middle classes should forget all about their complacence and start doing something useful. Consequently, these poets derive their images from factories, slums and fields. Their poems deal sometimes with subjects and situations undealt with before and have become a vehicle for the communication of new political doctrines and modern thoughts about man and his nature. In short, modern poetry expresses a deep vision of life in its comprehensiveness and entirety.

— 2 —

In this section the nineteen-thirties in England are singled out for the study of some of the distinctive features of modern English poetry pointed out in the preceding part, since, as Hoggart has put it, "Few

recent decades in English life have, retrospectively, so boldly defined a character as the thirties." [1] Among the outstanding poets of this period are C. Day Lewis, W. H. Auden, L. MacNeice and S. Spender. I have chosen for this study two books which, in my opinion, are truly representative of the poetry of this period : "Poems", a collection of thirty poems first published in September 1930 by Faber and Faber [2], and "Autumn Journal", a long poem first published in May 1939 by the same publisher. The two books, apart from their original and impressive poetic qualities, reflect clearly Auden and MacNeice's political, social and personal convictions that will authenticate the arguments stated in the first part.

In this period "unemployment was an ever-present feature of English life." [3] It was a "grey, seedy and squalid period, especially for the millions directly affected by unemployment." [4] From the international point of view, "Hitler's assumption of the German Chancellorship in 1933" [5] marks its starting point. The climax was "the explosion of September 1939" [6], whe-

1) Hoggart, Richard, *W.H. Auden*, Writers and Their Work : No. 93, Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1957, P. 12.
2) The same volume contains 'A Charade' dedicated to C. Day Lewis.
3) Hoggart, R., *W. H. Auden*, Op. Cit., p. 12.
4) Ibid., p. 12.
5) Ibid., p. 12.
6) Ibid., pp. 12-13.

reas "the crucial mid-way stage was the opening of the Spanish Civii War in 1936." [1] Hoggart adds :

> " For most young English people with left-wing interests this was a period of fervent left-wing (or of pacifist) activity, of Popular Front meetings, of milk for Spain and aid for Basque refugees.... It was marked by a more than usually strong feeling that 'the old gang' were appallingly unaware of the changing world situation. It was, in Auden's phrase, a 'time of crisis and dismay'." [2]

In 'Poems' two motifs of considerable significance underlie the structure of the thirty poems : 1. the psychological stand with its diagnosis of human evils and 2. the Marxist attitude with its interpretation of the processes of evolution and progress.

From the psychological viewpoint, Auden tends in his poetry to portray the political and social life in terms of modern psychology, especially in the light of Freud's theories. He maintains that social evils which culminate in wars among human beings are the result of our neuroses and lack of harmony with ourselves and with the world around us. We are suffering from internal as well as from external disorder. The decay is both spiritual and physical. Poems XI and XXII reveal the phenomena of physical destruction as repre-

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1) Ibid., p. 13.
2) Ibid., p. 13.

sented in the depressed and perishing industries in England, especially in the North :

> "Below him sees dismantled washing-floors,
> Snatches of tramline running to the wood,
> An industry already comatose,
> Yet sparsely living. A ramshackle engine
> At Cashwell raises water ; for ten years
> It lay in flooded workings until this," [1]

In poem XXII the depiction of this rotting aspect of the industrial background is even more vigorous and expressive. The most noticeable feature is the slow rhythm of the poem. This is suggested, first, by long lines—in contrast with Auden's usual elliptical ones—and, secondly, by the frequent occurrence of long vowels in 'roads', 'almost', 'smokeless', 'wharves', 'choked', 'canals', and 'rails'. Besides, the poem is permeated with a challenging and pessimistic note indicated by the opening imperative sentence 'Get there', the parenthetic clause 'if you can', and the concentrated adjectival groups which have as their first element an epithet implying destruction such as 'smokeless', 'damaged', 'rotting', 'choked' and 'smashed':

> "Get there if you can and see the land you
> once were proud to own

1) Auden, W. H., *Poems*, Op. Cit., p. 56.

Though the roads have almost vanished and
the expresses never run :

Smokeless chimneys, damaged bridges, rotting
wharves and chocked canals,

Tramlines buckled, smashed trucks lying on
their side across the rails ;" [1]

This physical decay is complementary to the spiritual one. Dealings of people with each other have become completely materialistic. Their social relations are mere formalities, and their greetings are 'clichés' that they exchange every hour of the day without any real meaning behind them. In short, their existence has become void of spiritual values :

"Touching is shaking hands
On mortgaged lands ;
And smiling of
This gracious greeting
'Good day. Good luck'
Is no real meeting
But instinctive look
A backward love." [2]

Even human love is confused with this materialistic attitude ; the poet is uncertain whether his beloved is thinking of his love or his money or robbing him of some precious jewels. A sense of pessimism in the

1) Ibid., p. 73.
2) Poem XVIII, Ibid., p. 68.

short Poem No. XIII is intensified by an ironical touch expressed by nicknaming his beloved 'my dove', 'my coney', by the extended metaphor in the rhetorical question : 'Do thoughts grow like feathers ?', and by the juxtaposition of two apparently disparate images: 'Is it making of love or counting of money..?'[1] This juxtaposition is more evident in Poem XVI where contrasted images among which there is no logical connection are depicted. The underlying unity is the theme of dejected spirit among the people who are suffering from neurosis and mental disequilibrium in places which look like sanatoriums. But it is high time, says the poet, for the removal of our personal as well as social evils in order to restore our mental balance :

> "It is time for the destruction of error.
> The chairs are being brought in from the garden,
> The summer talk stopped on that savage coast
> Before the storms, after the guests and birds :
> In sanatoriums they laugh less and less,
> Less certain of cure ; and the loud madman
> Sinks now into a more terrible calm."[2]

Love, forgiveness and positive attitudes are among the remedies for our social evils. But love and forgiveness

1) See Poem XIII, Ibid., p. 58.
2) Poem XVI, Ibid., p. 65.

cannot be defined negatively, nor can they be effected by mere saying :

"Love by ambition
Of definition
Suffers partition
And cannot go
From yes to no
For no is not love, no is no"[1]

"He say 'We must forgive and forget,'
Forgetting saying but is unforgiving
And unforgiving is in his living ;
Body reminds in him to loving,
Reminds but takes no further part,"[2]

Hence, positive attitudes and actions are the only keys to a real change :

"Simple to prove
That deeds indeed
In life succeed"[3]

From the Marxist point of view, Auden interprets most of the social and economic phenomena as either 1. the product of the antagonist, or 2. the consequence of reactionary measures which should be

1) Poem X, Ibid., p. 54.
2) Poem XVI, Ibid., p. 63.
3) Poem XIX, Ibid., p. 69.

strongly opposed and fought against, or 3. the relics of a distant past that was once good, but which is now deplorable, though worthy of our respect and sympathy, or 4. a sign of a better future.

The chief impediment to social and economic improvement is the 'old gang' whose supreme representatives are : 1. the middle - class with its 'priggish ways', 2. the financier or the 'seeker after happiness' with his 'simple wishes' and selfish enterprises, 3. the coward refraining from taking any decisive step forward or, at least, a firm stand, and 4. the defeatist who is reluctant to effect 'a change of heart'.

First, Auden addresses the middle - class in the hope that it may leave this sense of superiority and begin anew, otherwise it will be faced with the danger of a proletarian insurrection :

> " Shut up talking, charming in the best suits to be had in town,
>
> Lecturing on navigation while the ship is going down.
>
> Drop those priggish ways for ever, stop behaving like a stone :
>
> Throw the bath - chairs right away, and learn to leave ourselves alone.
>
> If we really want to live, we'd better start at once to try ;

If we don't, it doesn't matter, but we'd better start to die."[1]

The fear of a proletarian insurrection is expressed in the following two lines :

" Engine-drivers with their oil-cans, factory girls in overalls

Blowing sky-high monster stores, destroying intellectuals ? "[2]

Secondly, the financier is warned that he is doomed to failure with the system he stands for :

"Financier, leaving your little room
Where the money is made but not spent,
You'll need your typist and your boy no more ;
The game is up for you and for the others,

......
......

It is later than you think ; nearer that day
Far other than that distant afternoon

......

You cannot be away, then, no
Not though you pack to leave within an hour,
Escaping humming down arterial roads :[3]

1) Poem XXII, *Poems*, Op. Cit., p. 76.
2) Ibid., p. 75.
3) Poem XXIX, *Poems*, Op. Cit., p. 88.

Lastly, the coward and the defeatist are urged upon to put their shoulder to the wheel. The poet beseeches God to give these people courage, and illuminate their hearts with the 'beams' of will and power :

"Cover in time with beams those in retreat
That, spotted, they turn though the reverse
were great
Publish each healer that in city lives
Or country houses at the end of drives ;
Harrow the house of the dead; look shining at
New styles of architecture, a change of heart." [1]

Without this 'change of heart' we have no hope in the future. The last resort, then, will be the 'death of the old gang' as a prerequisite for the creation of a better society :

"Death of the old gang ; would leave them
In sullen valley where is made no friend,
The old gang to be forgotten in the spring,
The hard bitch and the riding - master,
Stiff underground ; deep in clear lake
The lolling bridegroom, beautiful, there." [2]

Auden's ominous tones were voiced more loudly in MacNeice's 'Autumn Journal'. The Autumn symbolizes the near fall of civilization. The 'Fuehrer' was

1) Poem XXX, *Poems*, Op. Cit., p. 89.
2) Poem XVI, Ibid., p. 66.

getting ready for a second world war and the Munich Crisis was at its climax :

> " The night grows purple, the crisis hangs
> Over the roofs like a Persian army
> And all of Xenophones parasangs
> Would take us only an inch from danger." [1]

In early 1938, the German troops invaded Austria, and in September of the same year Hitler claimed the annexation of a part of Czechoslovakia to Germany. The war seemed imminent despite the strenuous efforts of Chamberlain, the English Prime Minister at that time, to appease Hitler and avoid the disasters of a world crisis :

> " But posters flapping on the railings tell the fluttered
> World that Hitler speaks, that Hitler speaks
> And we cannot take it in and we go to our daily
> Jobs to the dull refrain of the caption 'War' " [2]

The poet's generation that has suffered a first world war is not ready to go through the bitter experience of another world war, the consequences of which are unpredictable :

> " And at this hour of the day it is no good saying
> 'Take away this cup' ;

1) MacNeice, L., *Autumn Journal*, Faber and Faber Ltd., London, 1949, p. 35.

2) Ibid., p. 22.

Having helped to fill it ourselves it is only logic
That now we should drink it up." [1]

The artistic significance of the 'Journal' is due, in my opinion, to the successful fusion of the poet's feelings towards human society at large and his own personal feelings and observations represented in the failure of love, his contemplations of the phenomena of nature which would be exterminated by the gigantic military preparations, and his quest for a standpoint among this vast sea of social, philosophical, and religious doctrines and beliefs. The conflict between his individualism, on one side, and his sense of fulfilling his obligations and responsibility towards the world society, on the other, gives his poetry profundity and enriches it with new dimensions. As Auden finds our panacea in effecting a kind of psychological equilibrium within ourselves by means of 'curing the intolerable neural itch' [2], MacNeice finds the cure in, first, the reconciliation between the two conflicting attitudes : individualism and social responsibility, and, secondly, in a proper balance between mind and body. This can be gathered from the following two quotations:

1. "You must lose your soul to be strong, you cannot stand
Alone on your own legs or your own ideas ;

1) Ibid., p. 24.
2) *Poems*, Op. Cit., p. 89.

The order of the day is complete conformity and
An automatic complacence
. . . . ; only at times
The Fool among the yes-men flashed his motley
To prick their pseudo-reason with his rhymes
And drop his grain of salt on court behaviour"[1]

2. "All that I would like to be is human, having a share
In a civilised, articulate and well-adjusted
Community where the mind is given its due
But the body is not distrusted." [2]

In the first quotation the poet indicates that while we are members in a society, we need not be mere automatic machines. We must also assert our individuality. In the second quotation MacNeice expresses a practical outlook : effecting mental health through giving both mind and body their due.

But before considering MacNeice's social philosophy as represented in 'Autumn Journal' it may be noticed that his best lines are those which express his personal observations. They reveal a 'romantic' poet at heart struggling to be a contemporary among contemporaries by suppressing his individual emotions. In various parts of this poem we come across exquisite

1) *Autumn Journal*, Op. Cit., p. 42.
2) Ibid., p. 49.

images which are full of vigour and passion. Their novelty is due to the fact that they derive their subject-matter and diction from our modern life without detracting from their aesthetic and poetic value. Take, for example, the following lines from Section vii :

"The night is damp and still
And I hear dull blows on wood outside my window ;
They are cutting down the trees on Primrose Hill.
The wood is white like the roast flesh of chicken,
Each tree falling like a closing fan ;

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

They want the crest of this hill for anti-aircraft,
The guns will take the view
And searchlights probe the heavens for bacili
With narrow wands of blue." [1]

Or take again these two images from the same section :

" And as I go out I see a windscreen - wiper
In an empty car
Wiping away like mad and I feel astounded
That things have gone so far." [2]

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

1) *Autumn Journal*, Op. Cit., pp. 30-31.
2) Ibid., p. 31.

" So that all we foresee is rivers in spate sprouting
With drowning hands
And men like dead frogs floating till the rivers
Lose themselves in the sands.
And we who have been brought up to think of
' Gallant Belgium '
As so much blague
Are now preparing again to essay good through evil
For the sake of Prague ; " [1]

Such mixture of passion and vigour touched by a tone of irony and expressed in a compact style and new images is among the distinctive features of MacNeice's poetry. MacNeice has never yielded to the temptation of writing propaganda instead of poetry, as other English poets in the thirties, including Auden, have occasionally done. However, in the last quotation above, the poet speaks for his generation. He expresses sympathy towards himself and his fellow-men for they are about to be thrown in the cauldron of a severer and more relentless war than World War I. He shouts:

" And we think ' This must be wrong, it has
happened before,
Just like this before, we must be dreaming ;
It was long ago these flies
Buzzed like this, so why are they still bombarding
The ears if not the eyes ? ' " [2]

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1) Ibid., p. 32.
2) Ibid., p. 22.

The stylistic devices exploited by MacNeice in these lines to convey this effect to the reader are noteworthy. The repetition of the lexical items 'must' and 'before' in alternant positions in the first two lines, i.e. 'must ... before' in the first line, and 'before ... must' in the second ; the partial assonance between 'must' and 'just' ; the simile of likening aeroplanes to 'flies' ; the extended metaphor in 'buzzed' ; and the rhetorical question 'so why are they still bombarding .... ? " indicate, among other things, the internal perplexity, amazement, disgust and pity that the poet strongly feels.

From the social point of view, MacNeice contemplates first the condition of the working class which forms the vast majority of people in the twentieth century. He describes their deplorable circumstances, having in mind the picture of the atmosphere in North Ireland where MacNeice was brought up :

> " Now the till and the typewriter call the fingers,
> The workman gathers his tools
> For the eight-hour day but after that the solace
> Of films or football pools
> Or of the gossip or cuddle, the moments of self-glory
> Or self-indulgence, blinkers on the eyes of doubt," [1]

1) Ibid., p. 16.

The blame is laid on those who resign to their fate, believing in predetermination, but the credit is given to the few who reject these fetters and resist the evils of our modern times with a view to improving the existing conditions and creating a better life through incessant action :

> "But the final cure is not in his past-dissecting fingers
> But in a future of action, the will and fist
> Of those who abjure the luxury of self-pity,
> And prefer to risk a movement without being sure
> If movement would be better or worse in a hundred
> Years or a thousand when their heart is pure
>
> . . . . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> First no doubt to stumble, then to walk with the others
> And in the end—with time and luck—to dance." [1]

In fact, Section iii of 'Autumn Journal' from which the last two quotations are taken is brimful with MacNeice's social principles. In this section he further attacks the social system that allows the profiteering minority to exploit man's labour and sweat, and to live luxuriously, but leave only the remains of their 'banquet' to the poor majority :

1) Ibid., p. 18.

"System that gives a few at fancy prices
Their fancy lives
While ninety-nine in the hundred who never attend the banquet
Must wash the grease of ages off the knives." [1]

Despite all these disparities, the procession of life should go forward. We cannot stop its progress. If we have sufficient courage to face the facts, the future will be ours :

"I must go out to-morrow as the others do
And build the falling castle ;
Which has never fallen, thanks
Not to any formula, red tape or institution,
Not to any creeds or banks,
But to the human animal's endless courage." [2]

There is still, then, a remainder of hope to save humanity from the pitfall which is in store for her :

"The grate is full of ash but fire will always burn." [3]

This will be realized if people do not refrain from the use of their legal rights. Like Auden, MacNeice believes that people should have the ability to

1) Ibid., p. 17.
2) Section ii, Ibid., p. 14.
3) Section xi, Ibid., p. 46.

distinguish between good and evil since they have the right of moral choice. Poetry, for Auden and MacNeice, increases our knowledge about what is right and what is wrong, about good and evil, and help us to reach the point where we can determine our choice intellectually and morally. Those who deny this right of free choice and renounce their share of responsibility do great harm to their societies. They are deprived of one of the greatest attributes of humankind : action,

" Pain, they say, is always twin to pleasure.
Better to have these twins
  Than no children at all, very much better
To act for good and bad than have no sins
  And take no action either." [1]

Despair and self-pity are destructive tools for human life, a life which should be full of energy and creativity armed with strong will and live conscience. Thus the poet gathers strength in the last two sections of 'Autumn Journal' to represent to us his 'Utopia', i.e. a co-operative community in which each individual gets his equal share of both profit and responsibility in order to enjoy prosperity and liberty. In such Utopia there is no place for day-dreamers, 'sleep-walkers' or 'angry puppets'. Effort alone can attain for us the utmost happiness :

1) Section xix, Ibid., p. 77.

"Or shall our dream be earnest of the real
  Future when we wake,
Design a home, a factory, a fortress
  Which, though with effort, we can really make?" [1]

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1) Section xxiv, Ibid., p. 95.

IV. O'CASEY'S THEATRE OF THE PEOPLE : A STUDY IN 'JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK' AND 'THE PLOUGH AND THE STARS'.

IV. O'CASEY'S THEATRE OF THE PEOPLE :

A STUDY IN 'JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK' AND 'THE PLOUGH AND THE STARS'.

Yeats and Lady Gregory firmly believed that the literature of any nation should be national in the first place. In order that this literature may be of an everlasting value, its roots should go deeply in the popular culture of this nation. Every writer must draw his strength and inspiration from the spirit of the race to which he belongs. Only then literature may go beyond the limits of its specific space and time to universality and comprehensiveness so long as it is distinguished by the elements of truthfulness and seriousness. But what do we mean by the phrase : 'the literature of any nation should be national' ? First, the writer must draw his themes from the spirit and imagination of the people of his country, preferably the simple and common people. Philosophical, social and moral questions are only by-products of his treatment of the daily incidents in the life of the people

or of their cultural heritage represented in folk legends, tales and historical events. Secondly, the language the writer uses should be inspired by the everyday speech of the people.

This is what Synge has done with the language of the inhabitants of the Aran Islands. He could create from it a poetic language comprising the distinctive features of the ordinary conversation of the Irish peasants. Likewise, O'Casey has improved upon the language of the man in the street. The language of his plays, especially his first three plays : *The Shadow of a Gunman*, *Juno and the Paycock*, and *The Plough and the Stars* is a polished version of the actual speech of the low classes in Dublin.

But whereas Synge is of opinion that 'on the stage one must have reality, and one must have joy..'[1], O'Casey preferred to provide us with 'truth' whatever bitter and ugly this truth may be. He assimilated the spirit of his age with all the incongruities it was imbued with : disbelief in ideals and lofty values like heroism, glory and nationalism ; irony of false slogans and 'clichés' ; attitudes of indifference and despair ; a sense of loss ; scientific theories that subject everything to experimentation, criticism and analysis. The

1) Synge's preface to *The Playboy of the Western World*, in Saddlemyer, A. (ed.), *J. M. Synge : Plays*, Oxford University Press, London, 1969, p. 103.

most suitable dramatic framework for the expression of this spirit is 'tragicomedy'. It does not arouse our laughter as much as it arouses our feelings of distress and despair. It attains its effect when our tears are mixed with our laughs. We may liken this genre of comedy with bitter tablets coated with a thin layer of sweet. It undoubtedly leaves bitter traces in the throat. Styan calls it 'Dark Comedy' :

> "The real climax of dark comedy may be, not the place in the play where the hero is pressed to a decision, the villain unmasked, the situation brought to a crux, but the place where the tensions are so unbearable that we crave relief from our embarrassment. At the end of 'Juno and the Paycock', we move with relief towards Juno's prayer, are reconciled by her loss, and comforted by tears ; then, cruelly, O'Casey scourges us with the drunken platitudes of Boyle and Joxer. We hear their words while Juno's grief echoes round our brains..., and the curtain disburdens us." [1]

Sean O'Casey had the chance to discover the comedy of distress in its natural setting. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries Ireland went through the cruellest crisis in its history. It suffered all kinds of torture, famine, rebellion, and shortage of human and natural resources :

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1) Styan, J. L., *The Dark Comedy*, Cambridge University Press, London, second edition, 1968, p. 263.

> "For Ireland at the turn of the century was an impoverished agrarian country, reduced to economic and political impotence by seven hundred years of British misrule, and by the accident of geography which gave her a rough island climate of heavy mists and rains. It was a time of great political as well as economic unrest, and there was not much relief forthcoming from the parliamentary struggle for Home Rule or from the internal feuds and 'betrayals' of Irishmen by Irishmen." [1]

Early Irish writers like Wilde and Shaw did not find in Ireland's heart - rending poverty an attractive material for their plays. They then directed their attention to the comic theatre. But O'Casey was to discover that laughter might be born amidst rags, distress and immense heaps of misery and despair. The two plays 'Juno and the Paycock' and 'The Plough and the Stars' are true expression of his nation's tragedy, on the one hand, and a vivid embodiment of the tragedy of contemporary man after the two world wars, the tragedy of the city with its poor working classes living in slums and miserable conditions, on the other. O'Casey himself lived this tragic experience in Dublin during his infancy and youth :

> " His family lived in the North City, one of those sections of Dublin which, with the poli-

1) Krause, D., *Sean O'Casey : The Man and his Work*, Macgibbon & Kee, London, 1960, p. 3.

> tical and economic decline of the capital after mid - century, soon reflected its moribund state in slums and social decay. Those that survived infancy were still quite likely to be killed by tuberculosis—as were two of the five Casey children—but if, as luck would have it, they were missed by the major diseases, they could then look forward to a life of manual labour or clerical routine, surrounded at home in their foul tenements by unhappy wives and children they could ill afford and solaced by the Church or Irish Whisky." [1]

Sean was forced to earn his living at an early age. He sold newspapers in the streets, and worked as a 'stock-boy, sweeper, handyman, hod-carrier, docker, pick and shovel navvy on the roads and railroads', [2] besides other various clerical jobs. In his life-career he came across strange human types which enriched his plays later on. Among these were the cowardly fighter, the valiant girl, the self-conceited and pretentious ignorant, the good-for-nothing idler, and the heroic woman who supports her children and mean husband and faces the vicissitudes of fate without complaint.

In addition, O'Casey's adoption of the labour cause, his defence of and sympathy with trade unionism and working class movement in general have

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1) Coston, H., 'Prelude to Playwriting' in Ayling, R. (ed.), *Sean O'Casey: Modern Judgements,* Macmillan, London, 1969, p. 48.

2) Krause, D., *Sean O'Casey : The Man and his Work,* Op. Cit., p. 8.

reflected upon his dramatic writings. He was an active member of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union founded by Jim Larkin in 1909. In 1914 he became the secretary of the 'Irish Citizen Army' originally founded to defend the rights of trade unions and protect the workers from police aggression. In the two plays under consideration O'Casey makes use of trade unions problems — another feature of our modern age in which labour has occupied a prominent position among human activities. He portrays to us representatives of the working class with all its virtues and vices. In 'Juno and the Paycock', for example, we see Mary Boyle, at the beginning of Act I, on strike in solidarity with a sacked workmate. She strikes out of principle, since she 'never had a good word for'[1] the girl :

> "*Mary*. What's the use of belongin' to a Trades Union if you won't stand up for your principles ? Why did they sack her ? It was a clear case of victimization. We couldn't let her walk the streets, could we ?"[2]

This very girl refuses to marry a worker like herself when he proposes to her. She aspires to marry an educated person from a higher social class, and thus falls the victim of a deceitful teacher who seduces her,

1) O'Casey, Sean : *Three Plays,* Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London, 1957, p. 7. All the quotations from O'Casey's plays used in this essay are taken from this source.

2) Ibid., pp. 7-8.

deserts her, and then leaves Dublin for good. We have also Jerry Devine, a self-made worker who looks upon labourers as 'the Leaders in the fight for a new life'[1]. He is striving to get to the post of the Secretary of the Union through hard work in order to fulfil his hopes in life, one of which is to marry Mary Boyle whom he loves. Although he utters slogans like 'With Labour... humanity is above everything', [2] yet when it comes to applying them he proves that his 'humanity is just as narrow as the humanity of the others' [3] as Mary puts it. In spite of his deep love for Mary he cannot forgive her when she tells him that she is going to have a baby from Bentham.

Again, in 'The Plough and the Stars' we meet The Covey, a self-conceited tailor who claims himself a defender of the rights of workers and labour movement and utters phrases he does not understand such as : "There's only one freedom for th' workin' man : conthrol o' th' means o' production, rates of exchange, an' th' means of disthribution."[4] But his real self is exposed when he humiliates Rosie, the prostitute, by addressing her savagely : "Nobody's askin' you to be buttin' in with your prate... I have you well taped, me lassie... Just you keep your opinions for your own

1) Ibid., p. 66.
2) Ibid., p. 66.
3) Ibid., p. 67.
4) Ibid., p. 165.

place.,. It' ll be a long time before th' Covey takes any insthructions or reprimandin' from a prostitute!" [1]

His treatment of such characters drawn from among the working classes is a 'subtle mixture of sympathy and satire'[2]. 'In them,' says Lindsay, 'lies the only hope, yet they are steadily demoralised and driven from the centre of the situation.'[3] Because these people have little knowledge, they can be harmful both to themselves and to those around them. And because O'Casey's sympathies lie with the proletariat, he sets them 'in a critical perspective' :

> "The people, for various historically explainable reasons, have failed to follow effectively the lead given by Larkin. Their confusions and passivities have made possible the middle-class domination of the republican and national movement." [4]

O'Casey's depiction of the representative members of the working class of his days and his commentary on them in his stage directions reveal their shortcomings which account for their failure to serve their own cause and to rise to the aspirations of the masses in their struggle for political and economic freedom.

1) Ibid., p. 175.
2) Lindsay, J., 'Sean O'Casey as a Socialist Artist', in Ayling, R. (ed.), *Sean O'Casey : Modern Judgements,* Op. Cit., p. 193.
3) Ibid., p. 193.
4) Ibid., p. 193.

In 'Juno and the Paycock' he describes Jerry Devine as 'a type, becoming very common now in the Labour Movement, of a mind knowing enough to make the mass of his associates, who know less, a power, and too little to broaden that power for the benefit of all.''[1]

O'Casey was one of the first dramatists in contemporary theatre that used revolutionary incidents, fighting going on in streets, civil war, professional fighters and national volunteers as background for his dramatic events. In 'Juno and the Paycock' the civil war of 1922 which took place between the supporters of the Irish Free State and the Republicans over the terms of the 1921 Peace Treaty is exploited as a setting, whereas the bloodshed of the Rising of Easter Week of 1916 constitutes the background of the 'Plough and the Stars'. But it is noticeable that O'Casey does not glorify revolutions and revolutionary methods in his plays. He uses them only as accessories. Soldiers and fighters are not treated as heroes ; neither does the writer highlight their movements. They go in and out in the scenes of the plays in their military suits, with rifles in their hands and revolvers in their pockets. The real fighters are those silent earners of livelihood who bear their responsibilities, struggle for a better life, and 'hold things together in even the most desperate conditions'[2]. They pass in front of our eyes almost

1) *Three Plays,* Op. Cit., p. 9.
2) Lindsay, J., 'Sean O'Casey as a Socialist Artist', Op. Cit., p. 195.

unnoticed in real life. Juno is the real hero in 'Juno and the Paycock' in spite of the fact that her world is not wider than the circle of her small family which consists of her idle husband 'Captain' Jock Boyle, her son Johnny who got a bullet 'in the hip in Easter Week' and whose arm was shattered by a bomb 'in the fight in O'Connell Street', and her daughter Mary. The family lives in very unfavourable circumstances in one of the tenements[1] of Dublin. Juno's rôle is to keep her house and family from being shattered down under the pressure of lack of means of subsistence, indifference on the part of the husband, self-seeking and egotism on the part of the daughter, the physical disability of the son, and loss of harmony among all members of the family. The mother's part as a tragic hero is not less than that of Mrs. Alving in Ibsen's Ghosts, if not greater. She rizes above hardships by facing life courageously and accepting her fate resignedly, which is reminiscent only of Maurya in Synge's

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1) The tenements were originally mansions for the Irish aristocracy and their dependents but in O'Casey's time the remaining wrecks of these mansions served to accommodate several families in a single room. Krause wrote that the findings of the Government Housing Commission established in 1913 revealed that "25,822 families of 87,305 people, or almost one - third of the population of Dublin, lived in 5,322 tenement houses, the majority of which were declared to be unfit for human habitation. And 20,118 of these families, or seventy eight per cent of the people in the tenements, lived in one - room dwellings." See Krause, D., *Sean O'Casey : The Man and his Work*, Op. Cit., p. 5.

'Riders to the Sea'. Her son is carried off to his doom ; her daughter, Mary, is deserted by Bentham after making her pregnant ; the only hope that is left by marrying Mary to her old friend Jerry Devine has dissipated ; her husband is more drunk than ever ; and finally the dealers come to get back the furniture that is unpaid for. Amidst all these heaps of disasters Juno refuses to let her faith in God waver :

> " *Mary.* Oh, it's thrue, it's thrue what Jerry Devine says — there isn't a God, there isn't a God ; if there was He wouldn't let these things happen !
>
> *Mrs. Boyle.* Mary, you mustn't say them things. We'll want all the help we can get from God an' His Blessed Mother now ! These things have nothin' to do with the Will O'God. Ah, what can God do agen the stupidity o'men ! " [1]

She decides to take here daughter away and resume her struggle for life :

> "*Mrs. Boyle...* Come, Mary, an' we'll never come back here agen. Let your father furrage for himself now ; I've done all I could an'it was all no use — he'll be hopeless till the end of his days. I've got a little room in my sisther's where we'll stop till your throuble is over, an' then we'll work together for the sake of the baby." [2]

The same is true with O'Casey's female characters in 'The Plough and the Stars' like Nora and Bessie

1) Act III, 'Juno and the Paycock,' in *Three Plays,* Op. Cit., p. 70.
2) Ibid., p. 71.

Burgess. Nora is a faithful wife. Her husband is taken away from her arms in order to satisfy his conceit after his promotion to the rank of a Commandant in the Irish Citizen Army :

> " *Nora (clinging to him).* No, no, no, I'll not let you go ! Come on, come up to our home, Jack, my sweetheart, my lover, my husband, an' we'll forget th' last few terrible days !.....
>
> *Clitheroe* (*to* Nora). I must go, I must go, Nora. I'm sorry we met at all... It couldn't be helped — all other ways were blocked be th' British... Let me go, can't you, Nora ? D' ye want me to be unthrue to me comrades ? " [1]

Men often sacrifice the happy moments of their lives to run after false ideals, and women have to pay the price.

Even Bessie Burgess, the street fruit - vendor, proves to be better than many a man and does acts of valour and nobility. She attended her neighbour Nora day and night when her husband left her to be killed during a fight at the Imperial Hotel, her baby was born dead, and she was nearly driven mad. Bessie's fidelity to her neighbour won the admiration of The Covey and Fluther :

> *The Covey....* I don't know what we'd have done only for oul' Bessie ; up with her for th' past three nights, hand runnin '.

1) Act III, 'The Plough and the Stars', in *Three Plays*, Op. Cit., p. 195.

Fluther. I always knew there was never anything really derogatory wrong with poor oul' Bessie." [1]

In one of her frenzies, Nora went to open the window, Bessie tried to save her from being kilied by the soldiers outside, but the poor 'inoffensive woman' was shot by a bullet which went astray from a soldier's rifle. She risked her life because of her nobility. Like Juno, Bessie rises at the end of the play to the stature of a tragic-hero. Such real heroines are the innocent victims who sacrifice themselves at the altar of hollow men : phrase - makers, poets and rovers in worlds of phantasies and ideals, and those who run for their skin from the battlefield to be called afterwards heroes who have won battles and fought for their country, whereas in fact most of them are 'afraid to say they're afraid !' [2] in Nora's words.

In contradistinction with these heroic figures, O'Casey presents us with petty and worthless characters in the sense that they are vain and little-minded human types who pay more attention to appearances than to reals values. Each type is controlled by a specific master-sentiment. Charles Bentham in 'Juno and the Paycock' is a school-teacher who has 'a very high opinion of himself' [3]. He is presumptuous and

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1) Act IV, Ibid., p. 202.
2) *Three Plays*, Op. Cit., p. 185.
3) Ibid., p. 25.

snobbish. He speaks as if he were a great scholar using pedantic words such as 'theosophist', 'The Vedas', 'Life-Breath' and 'the Prawna' :

> "*Bentham*...Theosophy's founded on The Vedas, the religious books of the East. Its central theme is the existence of an all-pervading Spirit — the Life-Breath...It is all vital force in man, in all animals, and in all vegetation. This Life-Breath is called the Prawna." [1]

Yet, he is an unprincipled opportunist who exploits the innocence of Mary Boyle, deceives her family in the name of a sudden legacy that has been left to them, and at the end proves that he is ignorant even of the simple wording of a will :

> "*Boyle*. The boyo that's afther doin'it to Mary done it to me as well. The thick made out the Will wrong; he said in th' Will, only first cousin an' second cousin, instead of mentionin' our names, an' now any one that thinks he's a first cousin or second cousin t' oul' Ellison can claim the money as well as me, ..." [2]

The Covey in 'The Plough and the Stars' is but another example of this worthless human pattern. He calls himself a 'big brain' [3] and assumes the rôle of a socialist and a hero of the labour movement just

1) Ibid., pp. 36-37.
2) Ibid., pp. 62-63.
3) Ibid., p. 143.

because he knows a handful of words from a book on socialism :

> " *The Covey* .... Th' only dooty of a Socialist is th' emancipation of th' workers..... Did y' ever read, comrade, Jenersky's *Thesis on the Origin, Development, an' Consolidation of th' Evolutionary Idea of the Proletariat ?* " [1]

In addition to these types of character, there are what we may call the completely passive type : the Dalys and the Flynns. They merely watch the goings-on in life as children do when standing on the sea-shore watching waves and collecting shells. They are ineffectual, but there are a large number of them living among us. Joxer Daly is a naïve hypocrite. He is a 'butty' of 'Captain' Boyle but parasites on him. His mannerism of shoulder-shrugging is 'meant to be ingratiating'[2]. He provides the comic relief in the play with his humorous comments, epigrams and proverbs. Peter Flynn, Nora's uncle in 'The Plough and the Stars', is but another Joxer in spirit. His only interest is in his attire. He always quarrels with The Covey. He sits watching The Covey and Fluther playing cards and looks indifferent to the shower of bullets and the burning city outside. Like Joxer, he is comic both in appearance and action. Their stupid and cowardly behaviour is the subject of the writer's ridicule.

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1) Ibid., pp. 208 209.
2) Ibid., p. 11.

The nature of O'Casey's subject - matter has imposed upon him the form of his plays. His technique is a blend of tragic and comic elements, of serious ideas and sentimentality. It is an interesting interaction of contradictory themes ranging from absurd fantasies to distressing and harrowing real events. Lindsay maintains that

> "This method draws strongly on traditional elements of drama, and yet it achieves something profoundly new. The particular tensions of irony, sympathy, humour, tragedy, realism, melodrama, and poetic aspiration are drawn together into a new sort of dramatic unity —"[1]

This novelty of technique which is analogous to that of 'Counterpoint' in music gives O'Casey's plays their distinctive flavour. A representative scene, in my view, is Act II in 'The Plough and the Stars' where O'Casey gives us a picture of the moral and physical disintegration which befell the Irish Revolution at that time, and of the failure of the fighters in their efforts to revive their nation. This picture becomes an integral part of the dramatic structure of the play, especially the scene which gathers between two seeming contrarieties: the world of drunkenness, prostitution, nonsensical talk and pettish quarrels inside the bar; and the world of emotional excitement, passionate speeches, preparations for revolution, war and bloodshed outside. In the bar

1) Lindsay, J., 'Sean O'Casey as a Socialist Artist', Op. Cit., p. 196.

we see the Barman and Rosie, the prostitute. She is complaining to the Barman that 'there isn't much notice taken of a pretty petticoat of a night like this...'[1] while we are aware at the same time of the world outside the bar where a speaker is addressing a crowd of Irishmen :

> "[*Through the window is silhouetted the figure of a tall man who is speaking to the crowd... The Voice of the Man.* It is a glorious thing to see arms in the hands of Irishmen.... Bloodshed is a cleansing and sanctifying thing, and the nation that regards it as the final horror has lost its manhood... There are many things more horrible than bloodshed, and slavery is one of them !"[2]

Rosie then tries to tempt The Covey to spend a night with her, since she can scarcely cover her weekly expenses. A quarrel between Peter and Fluther ensues and Bessie begins to bother Mrs. Gogan :

> "*Bessie*. To look at some o'th' women that's knockin' about, now, is a thing to make a body sigh.. '[3]

Such a note is mixed with the earnest voice of the orator outside the bar :

> "*Voice of Speaker*.... Heroism has come back to the earth. War is a terrible thing, but war is

1) *Three Plays*, Op. Cit., p. 161.
2) Ibid., p. 162.
3) Ibid., p. 169.

not an evil thing... When war comes to Ireland
she must welcome it as she would welcome the
Angel of God !"[1]

Towards the end of the act Fluther is putting his arm around Rosie and taking her to his house, while Clitheroe, Captain Brennan and Lieutenant Langon come into the pub 'in a state of emotional excitement'[2] and carrying the banner of The Plough and the Stars and the Tri-colour flag.

Thus, the two worlds are intermingled and serve as a commentary on each other. Through this contrapuntal arrangement of material we can see the incompatibility between the real Irish world with its boistrousness, poverty and moral collapse, and the untrue world of illusions, fancies, fervent speeches and hollow ideals which the volunteers, fighters and orators were living in at that period. O'Casey satirizes the latter world, and by juxtaposing the former world beside it he intensifies the original dramatic line which he draws throughout the play, from beginning to end, i.e. the necessity of stepping down from the world of futile dreams and false slogans to the bitter world of actuality. Serious and fruitful action is the only solution to the human dilemma miniatured in this Irish local environment.

Behind O'Casey's plays there is profound human philosophy. First and foremost, he renounces fanaticism

1) Ibid., p. 169.
2) Ibid., p. 177.

whether in religious or political matters. It transfers man from his large human society to a limited and narrow one. O'Casey says through The Covey's mouth in 'The Plough and the Stars' :

> "Look here, comrade, there's no such thing as an Irishman, or an Englishman, or a German or a Turk ; we're all only human bein's..." [1]

Having this principle in view, he condemns and ridicules wars, and propagates the idea of peace. The whole play of 'The Plough and the Stars', especially Act III and Act IV, may be taken as a satirical comment on war. This is seen through his depiction of 'the heroes' who are conducting the war. Most of the characters like Brennan and Clitheroe are in fact 'unheroic'. They are selfish and fond of appearances. They put on military uniforms to show off, but in time of danger they are interested only in saving their lives and even willing to take off their uniforms. The scene in Act III in which Brennan incites Clitheroe to push his devoted wife away from him implies that men, because of their weakness in facing facts, sacrifice real love and happiness for the sake of vain glory and unfulfilled dreams. The comments of Bessie and Mollser (the consumptive child) at the end of Act I are relevant here :

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1) Ibid., p. 143.

> "*Bessie*... There's th' men marchin' out into th' dhread dimness o' danger, while th' lice is crawlin' about feedin' on th' fatness o' the land! But yous'll not escape from th' arrow that flieth be night, or th' sickness that wasteth be day... An' ladyship an' all, as some o' them may be, they'll be scattered abroad, like th' dust in th' darkness!
> *Mollser*... Is there anybody goin', Mrs. Clitheroe, with a titther o' sense ?" [1]

O'Casey is a pacifist who advocates struggle only for peaceful development through incessant work and production, and the worker's arm is his only weapon in his battle for self-assertion and self-betterment. Juno says to her son Johnny :

> ".. Ah, you lost your best principle, me boy, when you lost your arm ; them's the only sort o' principles that's any good to a workin' man." [2]

Notwithstanding the great dramatic achievements of O'Casey in the two plays under consideration : portrayal of a clear vision of religious, political and economic reality ; deep insight into and exposure of illusory and false heroism ; skilful and delightful delineation of characters that have enriched the repertory of world drama ; reinforcement of realistic themes with "non-realistic modes such as farce, melodrama, satire and song" [3] ; rich idiom and poetic language

1) Ibid., pp. 159-160.
2) 'Juno and the Paycock' in Ibid., p. 27.
3) Krause, D., *Sean O'Casey : The Man and his Work*, Op. Cit., p. 47.

charged at times with tragic passion,[1] yet O'Casey commits faults which are, from the present viewpoint, lapses of taste or propriety rather than artistic failures. His shortcomings are necessarily those of tragi-comic writers who have "no fixed rules of conventions for a hybrid drama that is neither a tragedy nor a comedy yet is *both.*"[2] He exaggerates in the treatment of some of his dramatic and comic episodes. For example, he heaps the tragic incidents at the end of the two plays to the extent that they seem unconvincing. Moreover, his blending of tragedy with comedy is not always satisfactory. It sometimes arouses our repulsion. This flaw is not only responsible for the discrepancy between low comedy in its lowest vein and lofty tragedy in its sharpest note, but also for that 'horrible humour'[3] — borrowing one of Krause's phrases — which pervades the two plays. A glaring example is that scene in Act II of 'Juno and the Paycock' where the funeral of Mrs. Tancred's son is passing by the tenement in which the Boyles live. The mother of the dead volunteer is walking behind the coffin which is

1) Cf., e.g., the often-quoted Mrs. Tancred's elegiac words ending with the Invocation: "... O Blessed Virgin, where were you when me darlin' son was riddled with bullets, when me darlin'son was riddled with bullets !... Sacred Heart of the Crucified Jesus, take away our hearts o'stone... an'give us hearts o'flesh !... Take away this murdherin' hate... an'give us Thine own eternal love !" See 'Juno and the Paycock', Op. Cit., p. 46.
2) Krause, D., *Sean O'Casey : The Man and his Work*, Op. Cit., p. 48.
3) Ibid., p. 79.

covered with wreaths, and then Joxer comments with his phrase which calls to our mind his preceding humorous phrases : " Oh, it's a darlin ' funeral, a daarlin ' funeral ! "[1] The same is true at the end of Act II in ' The Plough and the Stars ' where the Officer is giving command to the Irish Volunteers : " by th' right, quick march ! "[2] at the time when Rosie is " *putting her arm round Fluther and singing :*

> I once had a lover, a tailor, but he could do nothin' for me,
> An' then I fell in with a sailor as strong an' as wild as th' sea."[2]

This mixture is not provided for the sake of comic relief or the intensification of the tragedy by giving it new dimensions as in Shakespearian tragedy ; neither does it aim at the arousing of our bitterness as is the case with contemporary writers like Beckett and Ionesco, but one feels that it is introduced merely to force laughs from the audience. Likewise, the overdoing of the performance of songs in the second act of 'Juno and the Paycock', the intentional mispronunciation of some words like 'argufy' for 'argue', 'aw rewaeawr' for 'au revoir', 'chassis' for 'chaos', and the frequent repetition of a given word or phrase like Joxers' ' It's a darlin ' ..., a daarlin ' ...' are all devices intended merely for humorous purposes.

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1) 'Juno and the Paycock', Op. Cit., p. 49.
2) 'The Plough and the Stars', Op. Cit., p. 179.

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ERRATA

PAGE	LINE	ERROR	CORRECTION
8	Footnote 2)	Firth, J.R.	Firth, J.R.,
11	Footnote 1)	p. 10 below	p. 12 below.
	Footnote 2)	*Autumn Journal.*	*Autumn Journal,*
15	14	*mawtihi*-nba aqat	*mawtihi* - nbaΘaqat
19	1	Kalimaatun	kalimaatun
	19	(i. e. thrones)	(i. e. thrones))
	Footnote 1)	*Kalimaatun*	*kalimaatun*
20	19	wa batina	waΘbatina
23	Footnote 1)	Riḥlatun	riḥlatun
25	17	layl / ¿allayl	layl / ˀallayl
29	10	ṭaami	ṭaamiΘ
	14	Kawnukum	kawnukum
30	19	(N. + Adj. + N.)	(N. + Adj. + Adj.)
33	Footnote 1)	*Kalimaatun*	*kalimaatun*
37	1	(Don't	Don't
38	7	?ila tii ?es	ˀila tii ˀes
39	Footnote 2)	See pp. 16-19 above.	See pp. 18-21 above.
40	16	PAIMER	PALMER
55	20	?arrigaalu	ˀarrigaalu
70	13	FIRTH J.R.,	FIRTH, J.R.,
	23	MALINOWSKY	MALINOWSKI